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# **Writing spaces: the Coleridge family's agoraphobic poetics, 1796-1898**

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**Joanna E. Taylor**

**Keele University**

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## **Abstract**

In recent years there has been a rapid growth in interest in the lives and writings of the children of major Romantic poets. Often, this work has suggested that the children felt themselves to be overshadowed by their forebears in ways which had problematic implications for their creative independence. In this thesis I explore the construction of writing spaces – physical, imaginary, textual and material – in the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772-1834) children and grandchildren: Hartley (1796-1849), Derwent (1800-1883), Sara (1802-1852), Derwent Moultrie (1828-1880), Edith (1832-1911) and Ernest Hartley (1846-1920). I suggest that these writers adopted and adapted STC's philosophic and poetic systems and employed them to advance their own unique poetics, which I take to include their imaginative approach more generally as well as their poetry specifically.

The spatial readings I propose offer an alternative to the customary temporal focus of an 'anxiety of influence'. I argue that the spatial imagination on display in this family's works enabled each writer to interact with other writers in the family network without compromising their creative independence. In advancing an agoraphobic poetics, I suggest that the Coleridge family productively subverted their influence anxieties and employed them to emphasise their imaginative uniqueness. Their responses to the real world offer an important method of considering their place in their literary community, and these responses rely upon the careful formation and articulation of boundaries. These limits are explored in their letters and private writings, redrawn in the form of maps, expressed through poetic form and invocations of other poets, and visualised through the act of writing. This thesis demonstrates that these writers' apparent anxiety masked confident assertions of their poetic place as important nineteenth-century writers in their own rights.

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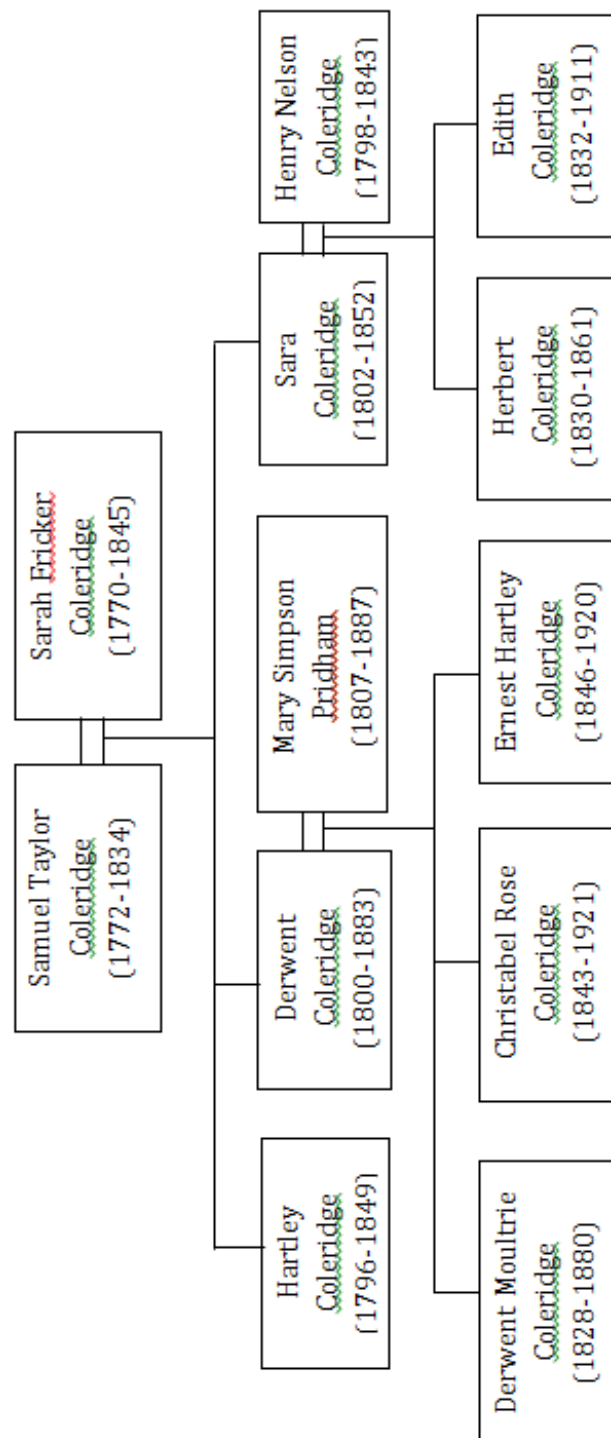
Pete Collinge has taught me more about eighteenth-century businesswomen in Derbyshire than I ever thought I would like to know, but I'm grateful to have gone through this process with someone so collected, thorough and open. Katie

McGettigan, the best scholar I know, is also one of the best people and I feel lucky to have had her support. Becky Thumpston has got me through the last few years, and I don't know where I'd be without her; I quite literally cannot thank her enough for simply being there. If the PhD did nothing else, it introduced me to you all, and I can't give it higher praise than that.

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## Coleridge Family Tree



\*For clarity, I have only shown the details for children who survived infancy.

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\*All figures, except Figure 10, are taken from facsimiles from the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, and are reproduced with their permission, but several are reproduced with the HRC digital watermark.

## Abbreviations

<i>1881</i>	Ernest Hartley Coleridge, <i>Poems</i> (Chertsey: not published, 1881).
<i>1898</i>	Ernest Hartley Coleridge, <i>Poems</i> (London and New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1898).
<i>1833</i>	Hartley Coleridge, <i>Poems</i> (Leeds: F.E. Bingley, 1833).
<i>AtR</i>	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, <i>The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Aids to Reflection</i> , ed. by John Beer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).
<i>BL</i>	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, <i>The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Biographia Literaria or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions</i> , 2 vols, ed. by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).
<i>BWM</i>	Lisa Gee (ed.), <i>Bricks Without Mortar: The selected poems of Hartley Coleridge</i> (London: Picador, 2000).
<i>Coleridge Fille</i>	Earl Leslie Griggs, <i>Coleridge Fille: A Biography of Sara Coleridge</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940).
<i>CL</i>	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, <i>The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i> , 6 vols, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71).
<i>CN</i>	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, <i>The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i> , vols I-II, ed. by Kathleen Coburn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957-61).

- DCL* Raymonde Hainton and Godfrey Hainton, *The Unknown Coleridge: The Life and Times of Derwent Coleridge 1800-1883* (London: Janus, 1996).
- E&M* Hartley Coleridge, *Essays and Marginalia*, 2 vols, ed. by Derwent Coleridge (London: Edward Moxon, 1851).
- Early Letters* William Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth (1787-1805)*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935).
- Essays* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Essays on His Times in 'The Morning Post' and 'The Courier'*, 3 vols, ed. by David V. Erdman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).
- HCL* Hartley Coleridge, *Letters of Hartley Coleridge*, ed. by Grace Evelyn Griggs and Earl Leslie Griggs (London: Oxford University Press, 1937; repr. 1941).
- HCP* Hartley Coleridge, *Poems of Hartley Coleridge with a Memoir of His Life by his Brother*, 2 vols, ed. by Derwent Coleridge (London: Edward Moxon, 1851).
- HNP* Hartley Coleridge, *New Poems, including a Selection from His Published Poetry*, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs (London: Oxford University Press, 1942).

- Home at Grasmere* William Wordsworth, 'Home at Grasmere MS D', in *Home at Grasmere, Part First, Book First, of 'The Recluse'*, ed. by Beth Darlington (Ithaca, NY and Hassocks, Sussex: Cornell University Press and The Harvester Press, 1977).
- ML* Sara Coleridge, *Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge*, ed. by Edith Coleridge (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1874).
- Phantasmion* Sara Coleridge, *Phantasmion* (Oxford and New York: Woodstock Books, repr. 1994).
- Regions* Peter Swaab (ed.), *The Regions of Sara Coleridge's Thought: Selected Literary Criticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
- SCP* Peter Swaab (ed.), *Sara Coleridge: Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2007).
- STCPW* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Poetical Works*, 3 vols, ed. by J.C.C. Mays (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- STCSW* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Shorter Works and Fragments*, 2 vols, ed. by J.J. Jackson and J.R. de J. Jackson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).
- The Friend* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Friend*, 2 vols, ed. by Barbara E. Rooke (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969).

<i>The Prelude</i>	William Wordsworth, <i>The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind</i> (1850), ed. by Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1926).
<i>PWW</i>	William Wordsworth, <i>The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth</i> , 5 vols, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940-1949).

### **Note on naming conventions**

To preserve equity between the writers whom I discuss here, I refer to them all by their given names, with the exception of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in acknowledgement of his preference for STC, and his descendants' tendencies to refer to him as such. In this I follow such critics as Peter Swaab, Nicola Healey and Judith Plotz. Derwent always refers to STC's son, whilst Derwent Moultrie is Derwent's son, except for when I discuss the two together when I label the elder Derwent, 'Derwent Senior'. Sarah refers to Sarah Fricker Coleridge, STC's wife and Hartley's, Derwent's and Sara's mother; in this, I revert to her pre-marital spelling. Where I refer specifically to STC's poetic habits, I talk about something Esteesian; something Coleridgean refers to what I perceive to be a trait shared among all the writers on whom I focus.

## **Introduction: the Coleridge family's agoraphobic interactions**

In June 1806, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was staying in Leghorn on his long journey back from Malta. He was in the grip of 'intolerable Despair', and was contemplating suicide. He wrote that he could find no other refuge than the 'Poisons that degrade the Being, while they suspend the torment'. One thought prevented him from pursuing 'annihilation': 'O my Children, my Children! I gave you life once, unconscious of the Life I was giving / and you as unconsciously have given Life to me'.<sup>1</sup> He repeated the sentiment in a letter to Washington Allston, where he elaborated that he had been suffering from 'a manifest stroke of Palsy', and he linked his recovery to his thoughts of the children. Regardless, his thoughts about them were not straightforward; he continued, misquoting a line from 'A Letter to —', that 'they pluck out the wing-feathers from the mind'.<sup>2</sup> His children might have seemed crucial to his physical wellbeing, but STC partially blamed them for his creative failure. The notebook entry and letter draw a direct connection between STC's survival and his children's; their relationship is imagined as an interactive process, whereby the children's influence on the father is at least as significant as his over them.

My aim in this thesis is to demonstrate that a continued sense of this family interaction pervaded the Coleridges' poetics throughout the nineteenth century. I focus on the works of STC's children and grandchildren: Hartley (1796-1849), Derwent (1800-1883), Sara (1802-1852), Derwent Moultrie (1828-1880), Edith

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<sup>1</sup> *CN*, II.2860. Future references to this edition will be made in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Letter: STC to Washington Allston, 17 June 1806, in *CL*, II, p.1173. For the poem, see *STCPW*, I.1, p.689. Future references to *STCPW* will be made in the text.

(1832-1911) and Ernest (1846-1920).<sup>3</sup> I suggest that each writer sought to articulate an autonomous poetic identity that was nevertheless created through exchanges within the Coleridge family network. Clearly all of these writers engaged with literary works beyond those published by members of their family; they were all, in different ways, involved in some of the most influential literary circles of the nineteenth century, and future studies will find ample material for reflection on these writers' encounters with other Romantic and Victorian works.<sup>4</sup> Yet their engagement with STC's legacy in particular was a unique feature of the Coleridges' poetics, and it is therefore their creative relationship to STC on which I focus here. What I want to argue is that these writers presented an anxiety of influence with regards to STC's work that masked a confident sense of their identities as individual poets.<sup>5</sup> All of these writers have suffered from readers' and critics' inability to 'distinguish multiple artistic independences within a famous writing family matrix'.<sup>6</sup> I argue that these writers expected this to be the case and in consequence articulate what I call an agoraphobic poetics. Agoraphobia, a term which I explore in more detail in Chapter 1, was coined in the late nineteenth century, and I suggest that agoraphobia offers a

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<sup>3</sup> Two of STC's grandchildren have been omitted, since poetry was not a central part of their creative output. Sara's son Herbert (1830-1861) was a philologist; he was working on an early version of the *Oxford English Dictionary* when he died of tuberculosis. Christabel Rose Coleridge (1843-1921) was a novelist and sometime editor of the girls' periodical *The Monthly Packet*.

<sup>4</sup> In the later decades of the nineteenth century, the Coleridge family were friendly with such literati as Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning. In fact, Sara and Edith had known the Brownings – both Robert and Elizabeth Barrett – since the 1840s; Herbert 'poked fun at the Barrett-Brownings', since the couple were part of the 'seedy and dull' friendship group for which Herbert mocked his mother and sister. The Henry Nelson Coleridges attended the same church in Regent's Park as the Rossettis, and Herbert and Edith were Christina's contemporaries. See *Coleridge Fille*, p.227, and Jeffrey W. Barbeau, *Sara Coleridge: Her Life and Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.157.

<sup>5</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd edn (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Nicola Healey, *Dorothy Wordsworth and Hartley Coleridge: The Poetics of Relationship* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.11.



lucrative analogy for these writers' expressions of poetic anxiety. A spatial reading of these works allows for an understanding of something that I want to suggest the writers discussed here recognised: that they could imagine themselves to co-exist alongside their precursors in space in ways that were not possible if they thought of themselves as simply part of a poetic line. This approach allowed them to engage with influence – and reception<sup>7</sup> – anxieties whilst using them to demarcate unique poetic spaces of both real and imaginary kinds. In the process, I intend to demonstrate that what Andrew Keanie has argued of Hartley is true of each of these poets: that their works connect to 'broader issues in literary theory, and to the deeper currents operating in large cultural processes'.<sup>8</sup>

Joyce Davidson and Paul Carter have both noticed that, although there is a huge body of literature on clinical agoraphobia, very little exists beyond medical or psychological contexts.<sup>9</sup> What there is, Carter labels as 'sparse, ambiguous and highly creative'.<sup>10</sup> Agoraphobia implicitly elucidates a phenomenological connection between person and place; it is a phobia that arises out of a problematic relationship between the subject and the external environment. In clinical agoraphobia, the sufferer often becomes house-bound; the 'protective boundaries' of the home act as a 'reinforcement and extension of the psychocorporeal boundaries of the self'.<sup>11</sup> The agoraphobe learns to adopt and adapt external boundaries to ensure the ongoing

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<sup>7</sup> Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Keanie, *Hartley Coleridge: A Reassessment of his Life and Work* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.ix.

<sup>9</sup> Joyce Davidson, *Phobic Geographies: The Phenomenology and Spatiality of Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.1; Paul Carter, *Repressed Spaces: The Poetics of Agoraphobia* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), p.8.

<sup>10</sup> Carter, p.8.

<sup>11</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, p.24.

survival of the self. Poetry allows the writer to explore the development of these boundaries in a variety of creative ways. As David Trotter puts it,

Phobia is an ontological disease. It might even be ontology's dis-ease with itself. It provokes us to ask whether ontology, underwhelming even as it overwhelms, might not after all have its uses, as a moral, political, and aesthetic resource.<sup>12</sup>

Carter notes that agoraphobia's etymological root in a fear of the marketplace remains important; he writes that agoraphobia 'cannot be shorthand for civilization's every anxiety. It has a precise locus – the agora'.<sup>13</sup> Agoraphobia is an expression of a social anxiety inextricably linked to a specific place. In the case of the writers on whom I focus here, that place is interpreted as a cultural space: the 'precise locus' of their anxiety is the literary marketplace, and specifically that area of it inherited from STC.

Carter distinguishes between an 'agoraphobic poetics' and a 'poetics of agoraphobia': '[i]t is one thing to characterize the smoothly imprisoning wastes of modern estrangement, quite another to track them'.<sup>14</sup> For him, it is only a 'poetics of agoraphobia' which can turn 'a place-making anxiety to good account'.<sup>15</sup> My focus here, however, is not only on how the Coleridge family 'track' their agoraphobic expressions of creativity, but on how they 'characterize' their individual spaces to best suit those expressions. I argue that an agoraphobic poetics encourages the writer to consider the ways in which his or her relationship to the external world impacts

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<sup>12</sup> David Trotter, *The Uses of Phobia: Essays on Literature and Film* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2010), p.3.

<sup>13</sup> Carter, p.179.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190.

upon the sense of self. Crucially, phobia is always controllable; however intense the experience, it remains manageable.<sup>16</sup> In aesthetic terms, Trotter suggests, agoraphobia is a 'dis-ease' that allows the writer to explore their 'ordinary doubt[s]'. He indicates that the commonplace nature of phobia makes it 'anti-Romantic',<sup>17</sup> but in fact, as I demonstrate throughout this thesis, these writers explored quotidian fears through extraordinary means.

Above all, this Romantic agoraphobia reveals how confinement might be necessary to ontological becoming.<sup>18</sup> STC recognised this apparent contradiction when he described his relief that Wordsworth had finally begun work on *The Recluse*:

I am sincerely glad, that he has bidden farewell to all small Poems – & is  
devoting himself to his great work – grandly imprisoning while it deifies his  
Attention & Feelings within the sacred Circle & Temple Walls of great Objects  
& elevated Conceptions (CN, I.1546).

The 'sacred Circle' binds the poet, but it is in this confinement that poetic inspiration can reach its full potential. This is the relationship that we will see repeatedly throughout the works I discuss here: that between imprisonment and imaginative elevation. Diana Fuss has recognised the potential of the interaction between physical circumscription and poetic freedom in Emily Dickinson's work, but she concludes that, in Dickinson's case, her 'eccentric' relation to space is poetic rather than phobic. Fuss suggests that Dickinson discovers a means of 'lyricising space, recreating in the

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<sup>16</sup> Trotter, p.1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.13.

<sup>18</sup> Søren Kierkegaard writes that '[b]ecoming is a movement *from* some place, but becoming oneself is a movement *at* that place' (*The Sickness unto Death*, trans. by Alistair Hannay (London: Penguin, 1989), p.66, original emphasis).

domestic interior the very condition of poetic address and response'.<sup>19</sup> What makes the Coleridge family's poetry agoraphobic rather than simply lyric are their complex relationships to their precursors. Their self-conscious deployment of anxieties of influence emphasises a discomfort with poetic space, and an agoraphobic poetics allows them to figure this 'dis-ease' in terms which encourage intergenerational creative conversations. They present what Susan Wolfson terms a series of 'Romantic interactions', whereby the creative conversation is 'reciprocal'.<sup>20</sup>

Wolfson's work allows for a more complex system than that famously put forward by Harold Bloom. Bloom's anxiety of influence is temporal in nature; influence travels in a linear fashion, from precursor to ephebe. Even his 'map of misreading' only allows for this one-way movement.<sup>21</sup> Wolfson's interaction, on the other hand, operates spatially. Interaction allows a network of mutual influences to develop, and Wolfson outlines how these connections can be traced across geographic, material or literary-formal spaces.<sup>22</sup> In the works I discuss here, Romantic interactions are carefully framed by tightly controlled boundaries that are, variously, geographic, imaginative, textual and material in nature. The deliberately narrow confines within which these interactions take place allow each writer to indicate where his or her own space might be located within the Coleridge family's poetics, and, by extension, the literary canon. Nicola Healey's important work on Hartley has demonstrated how his works display something much closer to Wolfson's

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<sup>19</sup> Diana Fuss, *The Sense of an Interior* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.49.

<sup>20</sup> Susan Wolfson, *Romantic Interactions: Social Being & the Turns of Literary Action* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), p.8.

<sup>21</sup> Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975; repr. 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Wolfson outlines these interactions in terms of three key spaces: the Lake District, the page and poetic form (see *Romantic Interactions*).

interaction than Bloom's influence, and I want to demonstrate in this thesis that the same can be said of each of the Coleridge family poets.<sup>23</sup>

Until very recently, critics have neglected to recognise these writers as talented poets in their own right; indeed, for the majority of the writers I consider, this process is yet to begin properly. The poetry by Derwent Moultrie, Edith and Ernest has been entirely neglected, although Ernest's editorial role, and its impact on STC's reputation, is being slowly acknowledged.<sup>24</sup> Derwent, on occasion, has been omitted from accounts of STC's life,<sup>25</sup> but he has been the subject of one biography.<sup>26</sup> Although he has been marked out as an important figure for the nineteenth-century choral revival, as well as the development of the national curriculum, much remains to be done on his creative outputs.

It is thanks in large part to Derwent that Hartley's reputation has been dominated by his relation to STC to such an extent. Although Derwent acknowledged that details of a poet's private life were not always relevant to reading their work, he felt an exception should be made for Hartley, whose name 'must ever be associated with that of his father, a portion of whose genius he certainly possessed, and appears to have inherited'.<sup>27</sup> Hartley's note that '*I*, does not always mean myself' has been largely overlooked in favour of Derwent's more forceful assertion.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Healey argues that Hartley did not suffer from a Bloomian anxiety of influence; in fact, she describes something much closer to Newlyn's theory of a Romantic anxiety of reception. See "'A living spectre of my father dead': Hartley Coleridge, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Literary Representation", *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 33 (2009), pp.96-105 and *Anxiety of Reception*.

<sup>24</sup> See J.C.C. Mays, 'Coleridge and Yeats: The Romantic Voice', *Variants: the Journal of the European Society for Textual Scholarship*, 6 (2007), pp.65-84; p.67.

<sup>25</sup> See, for instance, Kelvin Everest, 'Coleridge's Life', in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, ed. by Lucy Newlyn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.17-31. Everest remembers the baby Berkeley, who died in infancy, but neglects to mention Derwent.

<sup>26</sup> *DCL*.

<sup>27</sup> *HCP*, I, p.xx. All future references to this edition will be in the text.

<sup>28</sup> 1833, p.155n.

It has not been until the last decade that Hartley's and Sara's works have begun to be re-evaluated as important in their own right. Earl Leslie Griggs's biographies of both writers remain crucial texts, but Griggs generally accepts the view that they were both substandard poets and he does not give them the credit they deserve for poetic originality.<sup>29</sup> Healey has argued convincingly of Hartley and Dorothy Wordsworth that they

have been consistently valued as original and great writers but, ironically, the familial association that is so significant to the construction of their relational poetics has also been the cause of their subsequent neglect and misrepresentation.<sup>30</sup>

Healey's work, alongside Andrew Keanie's 'reassessment' of Hartley's life and Lisa Gee's collection of his poetry, has initiated an important move towards the reinstitution of Hartley as an important literary voice.<sup>31</sup> Peter Swaab's collections of Sara's poems and extracts from her prose have played a vital role in demonstrating Sara's prodigious literary talents and capacity for complex independent thought.<sup>32</sup> Jeffrey W. Barbeau has demonstrated a similar phenomenon; he reveals that she was a formidable presence in her own right in influential mid-nineteenth-century literary and theological circles. Like Bradford Keyes Mudge, Barbeau recognises that Sara often employed hyperbolic forms of femininity to access positions of literary and

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<sup>29</sup> See *Hartley Coleridge: His Life and Work* (London: University of London Press, 1929) and *Coleridge Fille*.

<sup>30</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.11.

<sup>31</sup> See Keanie and *BWM*. Future references to *BWM* will be made in the text.

<sup>32</sup> *SCP* and *Regions*. Future references to *SCP* will be made in the text.

intellectual power.<sup>33</sup> In a similar way, the emphasis of Sara's biographers, particularly Kathleen Jones and Katie Waldegrave, on the importance of domestic networks to the Lake District coterie is fundamental to the understanding of all of these writers' works.<sup>34</sup>

Sara and Hartley both understood that their works would be – perhaps unjustly – overshadowed by their connections to three of the most important poets of the age. Hartley recorded his belief that his work would only survive thanks to the poetic associations implied by the Coleridge name: '[i]f aught of mine be preserved from oblivion, it will be owing to my bearing the name of Coleridge, and having enjoyed, I fear with less profit than I ought, the acquaintance of Southey and of Wordsworth'.<sup>35</sup> Elsewhere, he complained that Henry Nelson Coleridge's review of the *Lives of Northern Worthies* drew too much attention to his name, stating that he would have preferred it if the work were treated 'with no more ceremony than if the name Dan O'Connell instead of Hartley Coleridge had been on the title page'.<sup>36</sup> Henry Nelson Coleridge highlighted his wife's surname, too, when he included her works in an article on contemporary poetesses.<sup>37</sup> Sara suspected that her surname might

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<sup>33</sup> Bradford Keyes Mudge, *Sara Coleridge: A Victorian Daughter; Her Life and Essays* (New York and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p.59. Barbeau writes that Sara 'transformed bodily pain and nervous anxiety into art. Sara Coleridge's writings are performances' (*Life and Thought*, p.52).

<sup>34</sup> Kathleen Jones, *A Passionate Sisterhood: Women of the Wordsworth Circle* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997; repr. 2000); Katie Waldegrave, *The Poets' Daughters: Dora Wordsworth and Sara Coleridge* (London: Windmill Books, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> *E&M*, II, pp.109-110. The note is dated 27 November 1843. Future references to this edition will be made in the text.

<sup>36</sup> Letter: Hartley to Sarah Fricker Coleridge, September 1835, in *LHC*, p.177. Hartley's suggestion is wittier than it might seem: Daniel O'Connell was an Irish political leader who campaigned for the repeal of the Act of Union, Catholic Emancipation and the right of Catholics to become Members of Parliament (Rachel Hewitt, *Map of a Nation: A Biography of the Ordnance Survey* (London: Granta, 2010), p.253). The review referred to *Biographia Borealis, or Lives of Northern Worthies* (Leeds: F.E. Bingley, 1833).

<sup>37</sup> Henry Nelson Coleridge, 'Modern English Poetesses', *The Quarterly Review*, 66 (1840), pp.374-418; p.414.

condition the ways in which her work was read. She wrote to Derwent from her death-bed in November 1851 to indicate where he might find some poems worthy of publication:

The poems in the red book are worth little – but have a *character* – taken together with the Phantasmion songs. Merely *curious* as the production of Poet Coleridge’s daughter – curious psychologically.<sup>38</sup>

Sara’s habitual self-deprecation obscures her pride in the poems; they have a ‘*character*’ of their own, a distinction which the dashes emphasise. She firmly repeats that these poems might be ‘*curious*’ for readers, but her specific suggestion that they are ‘curious psychologically’ highlights the connection she finds between her works as the productions of a poet’s daughter and as the outputs of highly autonomous creative thinking. Her poems might be read, like ‘Kubla Khan’, as another Esteesian ‘psychological curiosity’ (*STCPW*, I.1, p.512), but to approach them in this way fails to acknowledge them as the manifestations of Sara’s unique thought process. Being ‘Poet Coleridge’s daughter’ might come with its own set of rules and expectations, but these could be manipulated to suit the poet’s personal creative ends.

### **I. What ‘a Coleridge *ought to be*’**

In Derrida’s terms, the name ‘risks to bind, to enslave or to engage the other; to link the called, to call him/her to respond even before any freedom’.<sup>39</sup> In other words, it confines the bearer within a preconceived notion of identity. This binding has the

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<sup>38</sup> Letter: Sara to Derwent, 7 November 1851, in *Regions*, p.27. Derwent did not take the hint; although he saw through the press editions of the poems of Hartley, STC, John Moultrie and Winthrop Mackworth Praed, he never produced an edition of his sister’s poetry.

<sup>39</sup> Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, ed. by Thomas Dutoit, trans. by David Wood, John P. Leavey Jr. and Ian McLeod (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), p.84.



potential to threaten autonomy; for Derrida, there is a very real danger that the constraints associated with a particular name might strangle the person who bears it out of existence. Conversely, for the writers on whom I focus the name also demarcated a space which could be creatively productive. The Coleridge name in itself became a kind of phobic space; it confined the family within a claustrophobic area that was dominated by STC's legacy, but at the same time its circumscribed boundaries offered somewhere for each writer to explore their unique poetic identity in a highly focused way. Ian Watt has claimed that 'the problem of individual identity is closely related to the epistemological status of proper names',<sup>40</sup> but for the Coleridge family the problem seemed to be more ontological; for each of these writers, their surname acted as a sustained reminder of an ongoing quest for personal becoming as part of a carefully controlled family system.

Being a Coleridge meant upholding a very specific kind of identity. As Donelle Ruwe and Alan Vardy have shown, Sara in particular was at the heart of a family mission to represent STC in a way that was more palatable to contemporary reading audiences.<sup>41</sup> Their concern not to contribute to the negative rumours that continued to haunt STC's reputation extended to their awareness of how their own works would impact on the family's tentatively restored reputation. The publishing decisions of STC's descendants' tended to follow similar rules (with the exception of Sara's

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<sup>40</sup> Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (London: Pimlico, 1957; repr. 2000), pp.19-20.

<sup>41</sup> See Alan Vardy, *Constructing Coleridge: The Posthumous Life of the Author* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Donelle Ruwe, 'Opium Addictions and Meta-Physicians: Sara Coleridge's Editing of *Biographia Literaria*', in *Nervous Reactions: Victorian Recollections of Romanticism*, ed. by Joel Faflak and Julia M. Wright (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp.229-51.

inclusion of 'Poppies' in *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children*).<sup>42</sup> Hartley vowed that '[n]ot a word in prose or verse will I ever publish that can be tortured into a reference to our family's domestic affairs, or even to my own circumstances'.<sup>43</sup> They remained sensitive as to how their personal conduct might affect the family's status. They were acutely aware of STC's ongoing reputation as a drug addict who had abandoned his family, and they were anxious to deflect conversations away from a focus on how these apparent moral failings might be hereditary. Sara's poem 'Poppies' (*SCP*, pp.70-71) revealed how she struggled under the same opium bondage as her father, whilst Hartley was kept exiled in the Lakes, unwelcome at family events through fear that his evident alcoholism would encourage comparisons with his father's substance abuse. Molly Lefebure and Andrew Keanie have both discussed the ways in which shame – both his own and his family's – meant that Hartley was increasingly excluded from the family circle in the 1830s and 40s.<sup>44</sup> Hartley undoubtedly suffered both from the ongoing process of deciphering his troubled relationship with STC and from his family's caution in ensuring that no further bad press could affect STC's posthumous reputation.

Arguably the person to suffer most from this urge to protect the family name was Derwent Moultrie. Derwent Moultrie inherited his father's 'extreme good looks' and shared, too, his uncle's alcoholism without the saving grace of possessing a

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<sup>42</sup> On the family controversy over 'Poppies', see Robin Schofield, "'Amaranths" and "Poppies": Sara Coleridge, Poet's Daughter and Poet', *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 33 (2009), pp.65-73. Sara wrote to Emily Trevenen that the poem 'should have been left out – some other doggerel substituted, but I was poorly and Henry in a hurry when the small vol. was arranged' (7 January 1835, in *Regions*, p.6). Swaab notes, however, that the poem remained in later versions of the book (*SCP*, p.217n).

<sup>43</sup> Letter: Hartley to Henry Nelson Coleridge, 1837, in *HCL*, p.217.

<sup>44</sup> Molly Lefebure, *Private Lives of the Ancient Mariner: Coleridge and his Children* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2013), pp.289-93 and Keanie, pp.105-06.

'philological organ' or any trace of the genius expected from a Coleridge:<sup>45</sup> his mother, Mary, reported in 1842 that he was 'not as clever as a Coleridge *ought to be*'.<sup>46</sup> A Coleridge was expected to be gifted in some way, and there was plenty of precedent for this belief; several of STC's nephews held senior positions in the clergy and legal professions. Hainton and Hainton surmise that 'Dervy must have been a tragic disappointment to his parents'.<sup>47</sup> He was expelled from Exeter College, Oxford and Jesus College, Cambridge because of his dissipated lifestyle. Sara wrote to Mary that the seventeen-year-old Herbert, then at Eton, had heard tales of his cousin's 'goings on', although Sara comforted Mary that she did not believe that 'D. has any craving for drink like H.'. <sup>48</sup> In Michaelmas Term 1850, Derwent Moultrie's behaviour went too far awry for his father to redeem him. Derwent Senior was called up to Cambridge to pay his son's numerous and sizeable debts, from where he wrote to Mary to describe Derwent Moultrie's situation:

Reckless, extravagant, and idleness always, without an effort to the contrary.

No cessation in evil – not apparently for the last three months, for the letters from girls crowd upon him. Friday he was dead drunk, and on Saturday affected with liquor. The girl Mordecai he picked up in the street last

Wednesday. He attempted to marry her at St. Ives on Monday.<sup>49</sup>

Following this incident, Derwent Moultrie was expelled from Cambridge and promptly exiled to Australia. Neither of his parents bid him goodbye. He worked

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<sup>45</sup> *DCL*, p.233 and p.232.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p.231.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.240.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p.233.

<sup>49</sup> Letter: Derwent to Mary Coleridge, 20 November 1850, quoted in *ibid.*, p.234.

variously as a shepherd, an administrator at the Surveyor General's office, a policeman, barman, cook and tutor. In 1864 he secured a position as Head of Classics at a large school near Sydney, apparently by implying that he had graduated as one of his father's pupils at St. Mark's or had attained his degree from Jesus College.<sup>50</sup> He was unable to keep any job for long though, and by the end of the 1860s was penniless, except for the allowance his father sent him. For a time he tried to eke out a living as part of a group of Sydney-based writers who called themselves the 'Punch Staff' writers, but it was not a successful venture: his clothing was regularly impounded in payment of his perpetual debts. He was arrested on several occasions throughout the 1870s on charges of being drunk and disorderly (one of which was brought against him by his future wife).<sup>51</sup> All that remains of his poetic output is the occasional ballad printed in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and a poem dedicated to his sister, Christabel. Derwent summarised his opinion of his eldest son in a letter to John Moultrie in 1874: 'He is an odd mixture, with some talents, no judgement, much kindness, little principle – a cheerful, buoyant, half-manly nature – with no temperance – as if some part of his brain were wanting'.<sup>52</sup>

By contrast, Sara's son Herbert epitomised what it meant to be a successful Coleridge. His childhood interests seemed to recall his forebears' mental habits:

Our boy's activity of mind is so Coleridgean! He is not content with playthings  
or hearing the daily hourly goings on – the facts of life. He must always be

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<sup>50</sup> See 'St Mark's Collegiate School', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 July 1864, p.1; 'Geelong Grammar School', *The Star*, 4 July 1859, p.3.

<sup>51</sup> For example: 'Water Police Court', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 June 1868, p.2; 'Water Police Court', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 November 1875, p.5.

<sup>52</sup> Letter: Derwent to John Moultrie, 27 August 1874, in *DCL*, p.244.

imagining some place or mountain or river or asking why Bonaparte or some such hero did this or that 30 years ago.<sup>53</sup>

Herbert's 'activity of mind' reveals a number of key components to Coleridgean identity: preoccupation with imaginative landscapes; interest in historical events; fascination with individual identities, particularly those who are noteworthy in some way. Sara recognises 'the daily hourly goings on' as something unimportant to the Coleridgean character, and it is true that throughout this family's works the 'facts of life' are frequently undermined by a focus on more visionary subjects. Nevertheless, the Coleridge family poets on whom I focus here all uphold M.H. Abrams's influential definition of what it is to be 'Romantic': in spite of their disregard for normal events, their work explores the relationship between 'subject and object, ego and non-ego, the human mind or consciousness and its transaction with nature'.<sup>54</sup> The later Coleridge writers engaged in what Stephen Bygrave has termed 'meta-Romanticism'; they critique these Romantic topics, but also find in them materials for fruitful reflection on their own creative processes.<sup>55</sup>

## **II. A 'mode or form of perceiving': spatial theory and the Coleridges**

STC's most famous works – including 'Kubla Khan', 'Frost at Midnight' and 'Fears in Solitude' – interrogate the ways in which the poet interprets and negotiates space. These poems, like STC's evaluation of Wordsworth's poetry, emphasise connections

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.78.

<sup>54</sup> M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973), p.13.

<sup>55</sup> Stephen Bygrave, 'Land of the Giants: Gaps, Limits and Audiences in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*', in *Beyond Romanticism: New Approaches to texts and contexts, 1780-1832*, ed. by Stephen Copley and John Whale (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp.32-52; p.33.

between boundedness and productivity. In later years, STC considered space as something deeply personal:

if I had to express my conviction, that Space was not itself a *Thing*, but a *mode* or *form* of perceiving, or the inward ground and condition in the Percipient, in consequence of which Things are seen as outward and co-existing, I convey this at once by the words, Space is *subjective*, or Space is real in and for the *Subject* alone.<sup>56</sup>

As we will see in Chapter 1, STC posits a notion of phenomenological space that anticipates the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and later Heideggerian thinkers.<sup>57</sup> He transforms space from a ubiquitous experience into a highly subjective one. As I will demonstrate, the subsequent Coleridge poets explored the ways in which representations of space could highlight common themes between their works and STC's, whilst also articulating a '*mode* or *form* of perceiving' that was consistently unique.

In recent years, Isobel Armstrong, Sally Bushell and David Cooper have all argued that fruitful readings of nineteenth-century texts can be accessed through the application of twentieth-century spatial theories.<sup>58</sup> They cite Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and Gaston Bachelard as being especially influential. All three critics have articulated how combinations of these three thinkers' works can be used to explore

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<sup>56</sup> *AtR*, pp.171-72n.

<sup>57</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 1958; repr. 2002).

<sup>58</sup> Isobel Armstrong, 'Theories of Space and the Nineteenth-Century Novel', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 17 (2013), pp.1-21 <<http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/issue/view/84>> [accessed 7 February 2014]; Sally Bushell, 'The mapping of meaning in Wordsworth's 'Michael': textual place, textual space and spatialized speech acts', *Studies in Romanticism*, 49.1 (2010), pp.43-78; David Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space: Wordsworth, Norman Nicholson and the Lake District', *Literature Compass*, 5.4 (2008), pp.807-21.

productively nineteenth-century representations of space. Cooper acknowledges that it is important to remain aware of the 'conceptual distinctions' between Heideggerian and Lefebvrian thinking, yet he also observes that there are 'theoretical intersections of the two lines of spatial thought'.<sup>59</sup> Lefebvre's work draws upon Heideggerian thinking even whilst it moves away from it. Like Lefebvre, de Certeau is concerned with spatial practices and social productions of space. Bachelard, on the other hand, follows Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in identifying phenomenological relationships with the external world.<sup>60</sup> In all of these cases, preoccupations with ideas of boundedness and relationships between real and imaginative geographies are fundamental to understandings of the individual's highly subjective interactions with the world around them. Using the works of Lefebvre, de Certeau and Bachelard in interlinking ways highlights the slippages in the texts I discuss here between universal themes and everyday experiences. Derwent located similar shifts in Hartley's life and work; he identified something 'intensely *subjective* or at least introspective' in his brother's thinking, conceiving of Hartley as someone who saw 'the universal in the individual, yet rest[ed] in the individual rather than the universal' (*HCP*, p.xx). I suggest that this approach characterised the Coleridge family's poetry as a whole; as I will show, each writer dealt with questions regarding the relationship between the subject and the external world. They shared common themes, but explored them in individual ways.

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<sup>59</sup> Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space', p.807.

<sup>60</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicolson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974; repr. 1991); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984); Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (1958), trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1964; repr. 1994).

The texts explored here anticipate de Certeau's claim that space is a collective concern; for him, individuals are sites of plurality who interact with other individuals to create relational spaces.<sup>61</sup> This plurality is central to understanding the Coleridges' poetics. Reading the spaces in their works allows for the recognition that these poets can be simultaneously derivative and independent; in de Certeau's terms, they can '*be other and [...] move toward the other*'.<sup>62</sup> The 'intertwined paths' – that is, the network of familial and poetic relationships – which ran from one space to another gave 'shape' to these autonomous spaces.<sup>63</sup> Although each writer demarcated his or her own imaginative space, that space was imagined as being contained within an interactive network of 'relational' spaces; that is, spaces defined by their connection to the historical tradition in which they were posited.<sup>64</sup> That these interactions were framed within a discourse of anxiety does not detract from the fact that they simultaneously allowed each of the later Coleridges to construct an individual poetic identity that could co-exist with, but remain distinct from, a family tradition dominated by STC's legacy. I contend that it was their productive use of this 'containment' within bodily, geographic and literary spaces that enabled each writer to assert his or her imaginative autonomy.

This thesis establishes how these writers produced their own 'spatial code[s]' in four key ways:<sup>65</sup> physically, imaginatively, geographically and textually. Chapter 1 establishes more fully my use of agoraphobia as an imaginative and aesthetic trope. It

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<sup>61</sup> De Certeau, p.xi.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.110, original emphasis.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.97.

<sup>64</sup> Lefebvre, p.41.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp.47-48.



focuses on STC, Sara, Derwent and Hartley. Although I would not wish to diagnose these writers as clinically agoraphobic, they nevertheless each responded to physical spaces in troubled ways. The chapter reads private works (including notebooks and letters) alongside spatial theory to identify the ways in which place was integral to these writers' constructions of imaginative space. In particular, it argues that boundaries were integral to their interactions with the physical world. It uses STC's considerations of motion as a starting point for thinking about how these writers describe agoraphobic phenomenological experiences, before moving on to examine the ways in which Hartley, Sara and Derwent write about their perceptions of the spaces which contain them.

Chapter 2 builds on these ideas to demonstrate how experiences of boundedness impacted upon the Coleridges' creations of imaginative spaces. Through a concentration on Hartley's and Sara's constructions of Fairyland, I explore how they utilised this clichéd poetic space in unique ways to indicate the central role that interactions with precursors took in the development of their own poetics. This chapter departs from previous critics' works on these writers' uses of the elf or fairy metaphor in that it is more interested in how Hartley and Sara employed these positions to explore their adult poetic identities than how they were nostalgic terms always associated with previous textual versions of themselves. The third chapter expands on these readings via a focus on Hartley's map of his childhood imaginary world, Ejuxria, and Sara's cartographical sketch of the world represented in *Phantasmion*. The chapter argues that Hartley's and Sara's cartographical imaginations make clear the links between their works and the Lake District

landscape, and how those links functioned to interrogate their creative relationships with STC and Wordsworth. It demonstrates how both writers imaginatively adapted the Lake District to suit their unique creative needs, and in doing so indicated a departure from Estesian or Wordsworthian spaces.

Chapter 4 shifts the focus of the thesis to the third generation of Coleridge poets: Derwent Moultrie, Edith and Ernest. By investigating the spatial relationships implied by their employments of poetic form and the physical qualities of their manuscripts, it argues that these poets self-consciously constructed agoraphobic positions within the Coleridge poetic network that allowed them to engage with their forebears, even as they marked themselves out as distinct. It focuses on Edith's manuscript verse, particularly her construction of herself as a non-poet, before considering how Ernest used his manuscripts to draw attention to his sense of writing within a family collective. It concludes by suggesting that Ernest's published volume was carefully presented so as to emphasise its place within the Coleridge family tradition.

The thesis builds on the works of recent critics in demonstrating that these writers deserve recognition for their achievements as individual thinkers. More than that, though, it enters into discussions about the representations of space in the nineteenth century, and the role of key spatial theorists in deciphering those ideas. Specifically, it turns away from previous, temporal readings of anxieties of influence and suggests instead that reading these anxieties in the spaces in which they are imagined to occur allows for a more productive recognition of the interactive nature of these creative conversations. By extension, traditional chronological boundaries

are undercut; the Coleridge family indicate the degree to which distinctions between the Romantic and Victorian periods are flawed. These poets all posited themselves as Romantic writers, and they indicate that such firm chronological divisions do not work in their cases. These poets' ways of imagining space are fundamental to understanding how their interactions with STC contribute to their autonomous poetics, but this thesis ultimately seeks to introduce a connection between literary relationships and imaginative, poetic and physical geographies that might extend beyond the works of the Coleridge family.

## Chapter 1: Coarctated boundaries: the Coleridges' agoraphobic poetics

In *The Examiner* on 3 January 1825, Leigh Hunt suggested that there were two ways of experiencing space: 'the world we can measure with line and rule, and the world that we feel with our hearts and imagination'.<sup>1</sup> When he 'drop[ped] the metaphor', Hunt explained that '[m]atter-of-fact is our perception of the grosser and more external shapes of truth; fiction represents the residuum and the mystery'.<sup>2</sup> Recognition of both worlds depended upon the individual's phenomenological capabilities; that is, their ability to perceive the world simultaneously as it is and as it appears through an imaginative filter. In anticipation of philosophers like Merleau-Ponty, Hunt believed that the combination of the two approaches unveiled a landscape that was personal to the beholder.

Much more recently, Isobel Armstrong has recognised a similar distinction in space studies. Armstrong identifies the Romantic era as the moment of the 'spatial and interspatial subject[']s' emergence.<sup>3</sup> Like Hunt, she recognises two forms of 'being-in-space' which interact with one another: the 'primary lived experience of daily life' and 'the impulse to double or reproduce this "inherence" [a term she borrows from Merleau-Ponty] in artefacts, writings, paintings, spectacle and film'.<sup>4</sup> This chapter introduces the Coleridges' individual approaches to reproducing that

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<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt, 'The Wishing Cap', *The Examiner*, 3 January 1825, pp.2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>3</sup> Armstrong, 'Theories of Space and the Nineteenth-Century Novel', p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Armstrong, 'Space as Experience and Representation in the Long Nineteenth Century', 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 17 (2013), pp.1-2; p.1 <<http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/issue/view/84>> [accessed 7 February 2014].

'inherence'. It argues that STC and his children's phenomenological perceptions of the world are revealed in their works and explores spatial theories to suggest how their agoraphobic poetics are revealed in their writing. My focus here is on private works which reveal some kind of personal ontological intent: letters, notebook entries, unpublished poetry and, in Derwent's case, architectural drawings. The texts indicate that these members of the Coleridge family engaged with the physical boundaries of bodies and buildings in the 'world of line and rule' to construct interactive, yet autonomous, poetic spaces that expressed their lived experiences in the 'heart and imagination'. Space is revealed as the 'structuring element of all social relationships', specifically the imaginative connections between individual members of the same family.<sup>5</sup> The new spaces they outline interpenetrate with their precursors' spaces, or what Lefebvre would call their 'preconditions': existing factors that impact upon the new space's identity.<sup>6</sup> In the case of the Coleridge family writers, each individual's space inherits previous imaginative realms but alters them to suit the individual poet's creative needs. These appropriated spaces emphasise the connections within this poetic network with the advantage that, to use Armstrong's term, they can do so in a way that 'circumvents oppression'.<sup>7</sup> For the Coleridge writers, oppression remains central to their conceptions of their imaginative spaces, but what is important is how they employ or evade it.

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<sup>5</sup> Armstrong, 'Theories of Space and the Nineteenth-Century Novel', p.1.

<sup>6</sup> Lefebvre, p.164.

<sup>7</sup> Armstrong goes on to say that '[i]t is a praxis of space opened up to groups and individuals which is often expressive, a group or a subject's work on the world. It is an aesthetic that penetrates everyday life, an attempt to create a lifeworld that, at least temporarily, frees itself from dominated space' ('Theories of Space and the Nineteenth-Century Novel', pp.18-19).

Bachelard recognises that social and poetic spaces rely on interplays between constraint and liberty.<sup>8</sup> The relationship between 'immensity' and contraction is fundamental to Bachelard's poetics of space. He suggests that

[t]he two kinds of space, intimate space and exterior space, keep encouraging each other, as it were, in their growth. [...] Poetic space, because it is expressed, assumes values of expansion.<sup>9</sup>

There is a tension here between 'expansion' and the implied containment inherent to poetry; the 'intimate space' of the poem conversely expands upon the phenomenological possibilities of 'exterior space' even as the outside is reduced into the text. Bloom expresses a similar idea when he surmises that the poetic children of Wordsworth are left with the 'fairly absurd' problem of trying to surpass Wordsworth by 'going beyond Wordsworth in the process of internalization';<sup>10</sup> that is, they must make their internal space simultaneously more minute and more suggestive of expansion. It was a realisation STC had come to much earlier. His writing reveals efforts in hyperbolic internalisation which challenge the stability of bodily and imaginative boundaries.

STC's early poetry analysed the creative connection between closely-felt limits and the potential vastness beyond. In 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison', the lamed poet realises that he has partaken of a similar imaginative experience to that which he envisages for his friends. They wander in the 'narrow' dell whilst he recognises the

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<sup>8</sup> Bachelard writes that '[t]he two extremes of cottage and manor [...] take into account our need for retreat and expansion [...]. To sleep well we do not need to sleep in a large room, and to work well we do not have to work in a den. But to dream of a poem, then write it, we need both' (p.65).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.201.

<sup>10</sup> Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), p.60.

imaginative potential of the enclosed space: 'No plot so narrow, be but Nature there' (l.62, *STCPW*, I.1, p.353). Although the bower initially feels imprisoning, it leads to a form of imaginative expansion. The plot's very narrowness allows the poet to recognise Nature's omnipresence and causes him to question his earlier assumption that his friends walk through nature whilst he languishes in an unnatural bower. Similarly, 'Frost at Midnight' acknowledges the imaginative potential STC found when he was 'pent 'mid cloisters dim'. He could still see the 'sky and stars', however, and through them imagine other worlds (ll.52-53, *STCPW*, I.1, p.455). The verb 'pent' emphasises the poet's containment; the vowel enclosed within the sharp consonants phonetically enacts the type of imaginative experience STC describes. Furthermore, the internal pun of 'pen' indicates a connection between this confinement and poetic creativity. The poem concludes with the poet sat by the fire in his tiny cottage, imagining the vast Lake District landscape in which he envisages Hartley growing up. In short, being 'pent' encourages the poet to imagine far-away scenes; it is from 'contained' spaces that he can imagine expansive prospects.

Writing to Thomas Poole on 11 April 1796, following the publication of his first volume of poems, STC recalled his pleasure in being 'pent' in a different setting:

I love to shut my eyes, and bring up before my imagination that Arbour, in  
which I have repeated so many of these compositions to you -. Dear Arbour!  
an Elysium to which I have so often passed by your Cerberus, & Tartarean tan-  
pits!<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Letter: STC to Thomas Poole, 11 April 1796, in *CL*, I, p.204.

The harbour, which foreshadows the lime-tree bower, becomes a secluded paradise in the midst of industrial action; it protects the poet's imaginative autonomy and the integrity of his works. STC imagines the safety of the harbour in a way that ironically anticipates the bower's role in the writing of 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison': in this case, STC imagines retreat into the safety of the enclosed space. There is another boundary at work here, too, though: the poet closes his eyes to create distance between himself within his body and his body within the world. The letter anticipates the two main types of spatial concern that would dominate his later works, as well as those of his descendants': that is, the need to locate themselves imaginatively in a secluded poetic spot, with boundaries constructed using their own – often unruly – bodies.

STC discovered an integral relationship between containment and freedom, and this became a repeated trope throughout the Conversation Poems. The later Coleridges' works expanded upon this relationship, which they also found in Wordsworth's writings. For all of these writers, liberty depended upon the knowledge of the limits which contained the self. In other words, liberty could not be felt if it was not in some way bounded: as STC put it in *Biographia Literaria*, '[w]here the spirit of a man is not *filled* with the consciousness of freedom (were it only from its restlessness, as of one still struggling in bondage) all spiritual intercourse is interrupted, not only with others, but even with himself'.<sup>12</sup> 'Freedom' fills the subject, so that it is delimited, ironically, by the extent of the body and of the mind that conceives it. Without apprehension of these kinds of 'bondage', however, knowledge

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<sup>12</sup> *BL*, I, p.244, original emphasis.



of freedom would not exist at all. For STC, it followed that ultimate freedom is conceived in relation to confinement. Wordsworth implied a similar tension more succinctly in the opening lines of *The Prelude*:

[w]ith a heart  
Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,  
I look about[.]<sup>13</sup>

The preposition situates the heart's lack of terror spatially: 'at' indicates a direct relationship between fear and freedom. The commas enclosing the clause belie the poet's apparent confidence, however; whilst the enjambment suggests that the heart's joyousness is unbounded, the punctuation which contains the assertion that his heart is not 'scared at its own liberty' suggests that the poet maintains some scruples about complete freedom.

'Turning inwards' was, according to Jonathon Shears, 'a sign of independence', and Wordsworth ensured his autonomy by writing poetry founded upon his phenomenological experiences of places.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, as Seamus Perry observes, STC's popular reputation was based on an idea of 'a figure of colossal introversion'; he was careful to cultivate a persona which seemed to have turned excessively inwards.<sup>15</sup> STC's 'puny boundaries' were 'made' (*The Prelude*, II.218-19, p.53) out of a considered philosophical response to his perception of the world around him, mitigated always by the problems inherent to his diseased body. These problems continually shifted; as

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<sup>13</sup> *The Prelude*, I.15-17, p.3. All future references to this edition are in the text.

<sup>14</sup> Jonathon Shears, 'Wordsworth's English Poets', in *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth*, ed. by Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.449-66; p.466.

<sup>15</sup> Seamus Perry, 'Coleridge's Literary Influence', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.661-76; p.669.

George C. Grinnell observes, STC's body 'endlessly surprise[d] him with new disorders'.<sup>16</sup> I demonstrate later in this chapter that for Hartley and Sara, too, the troubled body became the locus for the articulation of a unique poetic stance. Their phenomenological standpoints were defined by their awareness of their unhealthy bodies.<sup>17</sup>

Neil Vickers argues that '[t]o understand Coleridge the patient, one has to apprehend both these vantage-points – the vantage-point of the sick man and the vantage-point of the philosopher – as well as the lines of communication between them'.<sup>18</sup> A similar apprehension of these multiple vantage-points is likewise necessary to understand the Coleridges' experiences of space. Furthermore, a developing language of psychological medicine provided the vocabulary through which STC expressed his phenomenological findings. It allowed him to 'map' his imaginative experiences in terms of the primary object of his external experience: his body.<sup>19</sup> For STC, like Kant, space is dependent upon phenomenological perception: he wonders if space is 'merely another word for the perception of the capability of additional magnitude' (CN, I.887). Esteesian space allows for the simultaneous mapping and comprehension of several co-existing vantage points. It enables recognition that the spaces beyond the body possess infinite potential. These spaces, and the problem of controlling them, were a central concern of STC's aesthetic and

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<sup>16</sup> George C. Grinnell, *The Age of Hypochondria: Interpreting Romantic Health and Illness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.58.

<sup>17</sup> Grinnell observes that health 'functions as a regulatory norm *producing* the bodies it polices' (p.9, original emphasis).

<sup>18</sup> Neil Vickers, *Coleridge and the Doctors, 1795-1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.2.

<sup>19</sup> Grinnell, p.12.

philosophical thought in the early 1800s. He discovered that, in order to be, it was necessary to be bounded.

Vickers recognises that what he calls STC's 'metaphysic of *feeling*' was informed by his medical reading. This reading focused in turn on treatments for the conditions from which he believed himself to be suffering.<sup>20</sup> I want to go further, however, to argue that STC's medical knowledge, acquired through and because of his physical and psychical feelings, allowed him to anticipate medical advances that would not be developed until much later in the nineteenth century. In the months leading up to his self-imposed exile to Malta in particular, what STC outlines in his notebook entries as hypochondria might be recognised today as a form of agoraphobia. I want to suggest that this phobia is made manifest in his poetry and becomes a key Coleridgean trope in his descendants' works. Before I examine these texts, it is important to define agoraphobia in this context, and to demonstrate how it might be retrospectively applied as a poetic metaphor, if not as a medical diagnosis.

### **I. Romantic agoraphobia**

Agoraphobia is a phenomenological concern.<sup>21</sup> For Trotter, it is 'a disorder of proximity and exposure alike', or a simultaneous discomfort with 'presence' and 'absence'.<sup>22</sup> Carter suggests that it is, at its heart, a '*movement inhibition*'.<sup>23</sup> In Esteesian terms, it is a problematic response to 'motion' (a term to which I return shortly). Agoraphobia is not a concrete condition; it is a broad term for a wide range

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<sup>20</sup> Vickers, *Coleridge and the Doctors*, p.79, original emphasis.

<sup>21</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, p.16.

<sup>22</sup> Trotter, *Uses of Phobia*, p.2.

<sup>23</sup> Carter, p.9, original emphasis.

of fears of both a spatial and a social nature that can, and do, vary immensely; for Davidson, the only necessary feature is the experience or fear of panic.<sup>24</sup> In the early years of the nineteenth century, these kinds of phobia might be located in the perennial 'nervousness' that Grinnell identifies as being part of the Romantic condition.<sup>25</sup> As Davidson, Trotter and Carter all emphasise, agoraphobia is an anxiety regarding the 'problematic nature of **social space**',<sup>26</sup> a distinction which the Greek root emphasises: the fear of the agora, or market, is partly fear of the open space of the town square and partly of the people who inhabit it. The phobia is not of social interaction but of being overwhelmed by external influence.

As we shall see below, the term agoraphobia did not come into being until the mid-Victorian period, but 'phobia' was a Romantic construct. As Trotter puts it, 'there was, certainly, phobia before phobia'.<sup>27</sup> The idea of agoraphobia as Trotter, Carter and Davidson all define it fits in well with Romantic medical ideologies.<sup>28</sup> As Grinnell notes,

Romantic medicine was profoundly social in its desires to train individuals into a physically and morally healthy state. This meant that disease was always potentially also a disorder that implied a greater imbalance in the life of the sufferer, a symptomatic opportunity to insist that certain behaviours, desires,

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<sup>24</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, p.11.

<sup>25</sup> Grinnell, p.171.

<sup>26</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, p.9, original emphasis.

<sup>27</sup> Trotter, 'The Invention of Agoraphobia', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 32.2 (2004), pp.463-75; p.469.

<sup>28</sup> Nicholas Roe is unusual in applying the term 'agoraphobia' to the Romantic period. He uses it in reference to Hunt; see *Fiery Heart: The First Life of Leigh Hunt* (London: Pimlico, 2005), p.225.

ways of being in the world constituted forms of illness that were harmful to greater or lesser degrees or led to them.<sup>29</sup>

Several writers, including STC and Hunt, articulated this experience, but referred to it as 'hypochondria'.<sup>30</sup> Hypochondria expressed an anxiety that was focused on the body in opposition to public spaces. Agoraphobia operates in a similar way. For Trotter, it is a 'dis-ease' as well as a disease,<sup>31</sup> and it implies a kind of phenomenological rebellion against social medicine; the sufferer perceives external forces to be harmful to their autonomy. Nevertheless, for the Romantics phobia provided a means by which unusual 'ways of being in the world' could be articulated.

The earliest use of the term 'phobia' can be found in Benjamin Rush's *Columbian Magazine* article of 1786, 'On the Different Species of Phobia'.<sup>32</sup> Rush, re-developing his mentor William Cullen's work on hydrophobia (fear of water), defined phobia as 'a fear of an imaginary evil, or an undue fear of a real one'.<sup>33</sup> By 1800, the term could still not be said to be popular: according to the OED, the second citing of it is from STC's letter to Humphry Davy of 31 October 1801, in which he describes his 'phobia' of 'inns and coffee houses'.<sup>34</sup> However, STC had started to employ the term, facetiously, sometime earlier. In 1797 he disingenuously describes having caught

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<sup>29</sup> Grinnell, p.6.

<sup>30</sup> For more on Hunt's hypochondria, see *Fiery Heart*. Roe notes on several occasions that Hunt felt calm when he was enclosed or 'wrapped up': see p.5, p.36, p.131, p.192, p.224.

<sup>31</sup> Trotter, *Uses of Phobia*, p.3.

<sup>32</sup> According to the OED. 'Phobia, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/142571?rskey=CQqhAb&result=1&isAdvanced=false>> [accessed 19 April 2013].

<sup>33</sup> It was Rush who suggested that phobia should be sub-categorised according to the object feared. Rush suggested a diverse range of phobic objects, including cats, rats, blood, doctors and rum (although he noted that this last was 'a very rare distemper'). See 'On the Different Species of Phobia', in *The Selected Writings of Benjamin Rush*, ed. by Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947), pp.220-26.

<sup>34</sup> Letter: STC to Humphry Davy, 31 October 1801, in *CL*, II, p.774.

'Brandiphobia',<sup>35</sup> and in a letter to Robert Southey from 15 October 1799 he jovially emphasises the connection in his mind between phobia and social anxiety: 'I have a great affection for Lamb', STC wrote, 'but I have likewise a perfect Lloyd-and-Lambophobia!'<sup>36</sup> Similarly, when Wordsworth picked up the word, he used it light-heartedly to emphasise his social ineptitude. He wrote to Francis Wrangham early in 1804 to apologise for his 'Letter-Phobia' (although he begged forgiveness for the 'uncouth wedlock of this compound').<sup>37</sup> The two poets' playful use of the term 'phobia' in the early years of its development is significant in relation to the longer-term meaning of agoraphobia; both men use it to denote some sort of deliberate alienation from society in a way which anticipates the socio-spatial concerns of agoraphobia. Before the clinical distinction of different kinds of phobia (with the exception of hydrophobia), both poets recognised its significance in discussing their relation and response to the social world.

Although the term was coined in 1870 by Carl Westphal,<sup>38</sup> 'agoraphobia' was not picked up by the popular press until the end of the decade following the publication of Henri Legrand du Saulle's study *Étude clinique sur la peur des espaces* (1878).<sup>39</sup> The *Manchester Times* offered a useful summary of du Saulle's findings. Agoraphobia, it reported, was a 'form of disease'

which consists in a fear of open spaces. [...] The fear is accompanied by a

sudden weakness of limbs, tingling sensations, and numbness. The [person]

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<sup>35</sup> Letter: STC to Joseph Cottle, [Early April 1797], in *CL*, I, p.321.

<sup>36</sup> Letter: STC to Robert Southey, 15 October 1799, in *CL*, I, p.542.

<sup>37</sup> Letter: William Wordsworth to Francis Wrangham, Early 1804, in *Early Letters*, p.355.

<sup>38</sup> 'Agoraphobia, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/4119?redirectedFrom=agoraphobia>> [accessed 19 April 2013].

<sup>39</sup> Henri Legrand du Saulle, *Étude clinique sur la peur des espaces (agoraphobie, des allemands) Névrose émotive* (Paris: V. Adrien Dalahaye, 1878).

does not know what he fears; yet his intellect is generally sound, as also his free will. Without [resistance] he will sometimes hesitate a quarter of an hour before venturing to cross a quiet street. The fear is more apt to come on the longer a person has been [sitting], and less so immediately after a good dinner. The causes of the disease are obscure. M. Legrand du Saule [*sic*] thinks it is sometimes brought on by immoderate drinking of black coffee.<sup>40</sup>

The newspaper identified two types of agoraphobia: primary, which was ‘most often observed in men intelligent and lettered, who are in the prime of life’; and secondary, which usually afflicted women, and which was combined with numerous other nervous disorders.<sup>41</sup> This is an unexpected gender divide, particularly considering that agoraphobia is now predominantly thought of as a feminine illness; Davidson points out that around 89% of agoraphobics are women.<sup>42</sup> It seems that, like depression, agoraphobia was used initially as an acceptable term for masculine mental illness in a way that distinguished it from feminine hysteria.<sup>43</sup> The *Manchester Times* reported that suggested cures included hydropathic treatments or bromide of potassium (an anticonvulsant and sedative that was initially used to treat epilepsy, but became the primary drug in treatment of a huge array of nervous disorders in the second half of the nineteenth century). The *Manchester Times* makes it clear that agoraphobia is a form of overstimulation; that a ‘good dinner’ would help to ease it

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<sup>40</sup> ‘Scientific Miscellany’, *Manchester Times*, 4 January 1879.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, p.1. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar also point out that these ‘diseases of maladjustment to the physical and social environment’ disproportionately affect women. See *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*, 2nd edn (Yale: Yale University Press, 1984; repr. 2000), p.53.

<sup>43</sup> Vickers writes insightfully about the gender implications of mental illness labels. See ‘Before Depression: Coleridge’s Melancholia’, *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 44.1 (2011), pp.85-100; p.86.

indicates remnants of Brunonian medicine in its implied belief in controlling the sufferer's 'vitality', which would also explain why drinking coffee might bring on an attack.<sup>44</sup> The newspaper presents agoraphobia as a 'disease' – something recognisable, physical and, potentially, contagious – and a dis-ease, or an inability to maintain a sense of control over the self in a modern, primarily urban, world.

A column from the periodical *Funny Folks* in 1886 neatly encapsulated the dual meaning of phobia as both a contagious disease and a socially-debilitating dis-ease that could threaten the sanity and integrity of late nineteenth-century social spaces.<sup>45</sup> Two citizens stand on a street corner attributing various types of phobia to every animal they come across. The first citizen is outside so early because he needed to get away from his cat which, he suspects, has 'a case of felisophobia'. The second citizen confesses that he had to leave his house for fear that his son's rabbit has developed 'rodentaphobia'. They think the donkey has 'asinophobia'; the horse, 'hippophobia'; and the pig whose bacon the second citizen ate that morning is feared to have suffered from 'porcophobia', causing the man to worry that he has now caught that disease by imbibing the animal's meat. Eventually they both agree that they 'can't stand' being in a place where everything is phobic, and they leave. It is significant that the scene takes place on a shopping street; this is the Victorian agora, the archetypal site of agoraphobic dis-ease. Phobia becomes contagious through the citizens' perception of the marketplace; it is their gaze which infects the other objects. This Victorian agora is a place of phobia which generates phobia *ad infinitum*.

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<sup>44</sup> James Robert Allard provides a helpful summary of Brunonian medicine. See *Romanticism, Medicine and the Poet's Body* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.30.

<sup>45</sup> 'Phobiana', *Funny Folks*, Issue 621, 16 October 1886.



If we return to the *Manchester Times* we find that agoraphobia was used at an early stage to describe this kind of egotistical social fear. A correspondent wrote to the newspaper to suggest that agoraphobia was

[a] peculiar state of nervous excitability, and he [the correspondent] has proposed that the term 'Autophobia', fear of self, should be substituted as more correctly indicating this.<sup>46</sup>

Fear of open space, then, might in fact be more productively thought of in terms of the sufferer's perception of themselves in relation to the external world. An agoraphobic poetics is also, to adopt the *Manchester Times's* language, autophobic; it represents the poet's fear, or anxiety, over a part of their identity.

Since the early 1990s, agoraphobia – a term which should be taken as including autophobia – has been increasingly recognised as an important characteristic of modernity. Carter and Anthony Vidler agree that since the 1870s phobia has been a recognisable element of urban life in particular.<sup>47</sup> Trotter neatly summarises the usual opinion when he writes that 'the last three decades of the nineteenth century were phobia's *belle époque*'.<sup>48</sup> Yet, as I demonstrated with regards to STC's and Wordsworth's uses of the word 'phobia', signs of this kind of social disease began to be evident in the early years of the century. The Romantic historical moment, a period of crisis that was to have profound implications, began to witness the kind of social shift that Trotter discovers in the 1870s. As Robert Mitchell states, it is when systems stop functioning well that they become visible, at which point they

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<sup>46</sup> 'Art and Literary Gossip', *Manchester Times*, 8 February 1879, p.48.

<sup>47</sup> Carter, p.173; Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (London and Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992), p.6.

<sup>48</sup> Trotter, *Uses of Phobia*, p.29.

instigate 'moments in which the potential for radically different forms of social systems become palpable'. He suggests that it is in such moments of 'crisis' that these new systems become phenomenologically available.<sup>49</sup> What I want to suggest here is that the Romantic period, a time of crisis in a huge variety of well-documented ways, was a turning point in the development of spatial phobia. Even though the language did not yet exist to describe it, this era displayed several symptoms that were recognisably agoraphobic.

STC's reading of Malthus in early 1804 might suggest a concern symptomatic of this period about the increasingly heterogeneous, and overpopulated, nature of Romantic society. Rapid urban expansion was altering the country. Throughout the Victorian period, city architects in Britain and Europe were concerned with designing city spaces in a way that mitigated the effects of a dramatic rise in agoraphobic symptoms amongst city dwellers.<sup>50</sup> As Davidson and Carter's accounts make clear, because of its necessary association with the marketplace, agoraphobia has traditionally been thought of as a city syndrome, and little work has been done on representations of the disorder in rural locations.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, from the 1780s onwards, the countryside too was becoming swiftly bounded.

The Enclosure Acts had profound consequences for the Romantics' imaginations. Carter notes that the surveyor's lines 'cut up the environment into a rectilinear jigsaw that bore no resemblance to the ground's spatio-temporal

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<sup>49</sup> Robert Mitchell, *Sympathy and the State in the Romantic Era: Systems, State Finance, and the Shadows of Futurity* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p.19.

<sup>50</sup> Carter observes, though, that some commentators suggest that Roman and medieval architects deliberately avoided large open spaces (p.119).

<sup>51</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, pp.22-23 and Carter, p.32.

continuum',<sup>52</sup> and Briony McDonagh and Stephen Daniels suggest that this lack of sympathy for the landscape was tantamount to a criminal act: 'enclosure has been enlisted as one of the social crime scenes in the global narrative of modernization, one of England's domestic historical traumas'.<sup>53</sup> Enclosure, in combination with the passing of laws like the suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1794 and the Seditious Meetings Act in 1795, meant that English liberty seemed increasingly, and perversely, to depend upon the narrowing of boundaries. Burke, Cowper and Southey all remained staunchly opposed to the Enclosure Acts.<sup>54</sup> The enclosure of the land near to Keats's school at Enfield in 1803 was to find its way into his later poetry, whilst much of John Clare's writing was inspired by the enclosure of his native Northamptonshire.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, the Ordnance Survey movement meant that these new local boundaries were being confirmed on maps which, for the first time, depicted each county in detail. The discovery of longitude meant that enclosure became a concern expressed on a global scale.

Norbert Lennartz recognises the wide-reaching consequences various forms of enclosure had on early nineteenth-century thinking:

[t]he influential shift of paradigm from the Romantic idea of boundless freedom to the bitter awareness of man's Icarian fall and to the image of the human condition as a Promethean creature chained by "[a] heavy weight of

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<sup>52</sup> Carter, p.156.

<sup>53</sup> Briony McDonagh and Stephen Daniels, 'Enclosure stories: narratives from Northamptonshire', *Cultural Geographies*, 19.1 (2012), pp.107-21; p.107.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.112.

<sup>55</sup> See Roe, *John Keats: A New Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p.21; John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730-1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). For a more detailed exploration of the effect of enclosure on the Romantic imagination, see Rachel Crawford, *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape, 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

hours” led to different approaches to early 19<sup>th</sup>-century reality, which both in Regency England and continental Europe was characterized by restoration and a return to the *ancien regime*.<sup>56</sup>

Enclosure, whether witnessed by the increasing numbers of hedgerows crossing the landscape, the corresponding lines on newly drawn maps, or restrictions on personal expression, was manifestly a core concern of the early Romantic period. As John T. Ogden recognised, ‘[d]uring the eighteenth century the idea of distance comes to be based more fully than theretofore upon first-hand experience with perception and upon observation of how the human mind works’.<sup>57</sup> For Ogden it was during the eighteenth century that the body became the centre of individual responses to landscape.

The Romantic body was undergoing its own experiences of increasing confinement. As I discuss in more detail later in this chapter, developments in disciplinary procedures and treatments of madness focused on keeping the body within closely-regulated confines, whether by use of bondage, cells or straitjackets.<sup>58</sup> The sane body was one kept within and regulated by socially normative limits. What the *Manchester Times* recognised as secondary phobia was, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, classed as a type of hysteria: it was a feminine madness and as such belonged in the confines of the home. However, the acknowledged

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<sup>56</sup> Norbert Lennartz, ‘Icarian Romanticism: The Motif of Soaring and Falling in British Romantic Poetry’, *Romanticism*, 15.3 (2009), pp.213-24; p.218.

<sup>57</sup> John T. Ogden, ‘From Spatial to Aesthetic Distance in the Eighteenth Century’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 25.1 (1974), pp.63-78; p.64.

<sup>58</sup> Michel Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (trans. by Richard Howard (London and New York: Routledge, 1967; repr. 2001)) remains a seminal text in the study of historical treatments of madness. See also Roy Porter, *Madness: A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) and Roy Porter and David Wright (eds), *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives, 1800-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

insanity of George III from 1788 onwards meant that madness became a nationwide political and constitutional concern.<sup>59</sup> Closer to home for the Coleridges, reminders of madness presented themselves in Mary Lamb and Charles Lloyd in the 1790s and, later, in Edith Southey. Their domestic experiences of mental disorder culminated in Dorothy Wordsworth's and Robert Southey's dementia.

Phobia, like the 'depression' which STC diagnosed in himself,<sup>60</sup> was recognised as a mild form of madness, and adopting what Allan Ingram calls 'mad' language allowed for the subversive renegotiation of traditional boundaries. Ingram notes the power of language in granting 'the mad' a degree of power:

[t]he linguistic acts of the mad depend, on one side, on the specific context of a social system, and on another the linguistic rule system to which speech in that social system must comply. Where they are unique is in the imperatives for expression being themselves unacknowledged by that social system[.]<sup>61</sup>

'[M]ad' language offered, in de Certeau's words, '*a way of using imposed systems*' in order to demarcate individualised space from the dominant spatial strategy.<sup>62</sup> Throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, madness became increasingly recognised as a clinical condition. Whilst this recognition meant the development of formalised institutional treatments, it did not reduce the cultural uses to which madness was put. Poetic 'genius' continued to be equated, by readers and

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<sup>59</sup> Allan Ingram notes that '[s]uddenly, in December 1788, the private world of discreetly concealed lunacy was in the public domain'. See *The Madhouse of Language: Writing and Reading Madness in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p.5.

<sup>60</sup> See Vickers, 'Before Depression: Coleridge's Melancholia', pp.85-100 and Michael O'Neill, "'Anxious Cares": From Pope's Spleen to Coleridge's Dejection', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 44.1 (2012), pp.99-118.

<sup>61</sup> Ingram, p.9.

<sup>62</sup> De Certeau, p.18, original emphasis.

the poets themselves, with a form of madness.<sup>63</sup> As Ingram goes on to suggest, '[m]adness, like the dream world, exists in a different dimension of time, of experience, from the perspectives of sanity'.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, phobic responses to an established space provided a new way of describing it. Furthermore, phobia, and the highly subjective mode of experiencing the world upon which it depended, exaggerated the writer's phenomenological uniqueness; their imaginative spaces became expressions of their non-normative perceptions of the external world.

Responses to these forms of enclosure highlighted the ways in which agoraphobia could co-exist alongside its opposite, claustrophobia. Colin St John Wilson suspects that spatial phobia is an inevitable part of the human condition: '[f]rom the moment of being born we spend our lives in a state of comfort or discomfort on a scale of sensibility that stretches between claustrophobia and agoraphobia'.<sup>65</sup> Carter agrees that claustro- and agoraphobia are

phases of one anxiety, which expresses itself in an oscillation between the desire for contact with the other and a fear of it, between the desire to enter a relationship and panic at the thought of it. [...] Agoraphobia, a sense of complete isolation, and claustrophobia, a complete merging of identity, are, then, two poles of a single existential dilemma.<sup>66</sup>

For Carter, agoraphobia must have the agora as its locus.<sup>67</sup> In terms of the poetics I discuss here, agoraphobia indicates anxieties regarding the poet's imaginative

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<sup>63</sup> Tristanne Connolly and Steve Clark, *Liberating Medicine, 1720-1835* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), p.4.

<sup>64</sup> Ingram, p.104.

<sup>65</sup> Colin St. John Wilson, 'The Natural Imagination', in *Architectural Reflections: Studies in the Philosophy and Practice of Architecture* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1992), pp.5-6, quoted in Carter, p.181.

<sup>66</sup> Carter, pp.32-33.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.179.

autonomy in the literary marketplace. In the case of the later Coleridges, that anxiety focused on their ability to mark out their own poetic spaces which interact with, yet remain distinct from, STC's more famous imaginative territory. They construct their boundaries imaginatively, textually and materially in ways that redefine physical and geographic boundaries as well. Carter's definition of agoraphobia is helpful in asserting that this condition could put sufferers imaginatively in a position of strength: it is a '*place-making anxiety*' that may also be a 'disguised form of agoraphilia'.<sup>68</sup> Agoraphobia becomes a means of expressing the poet's reimagining of public spaces (physical and literary), suggesting their creative need for new spaces in order to reinvigorate old ones. This oscillation between agoraphobia and claustrophobia is a source of what STC termed 'motion', which he recognised as the life-blood of successful poetry.<sup>69</sup> It is an important term for STC, as I demonstrate in the next section.

STC recognised in himself the co-existence of both kinds of phobia. In December 1804, in the midst of one of the most apparently profound moments of self-imposed social exclusion of his life, at least from his closest friends and family, STC could write that '[a]t times, <I become restless: for my nature is very social>' (*CN*, II.2322). For STC, restlessness was, as we are about to see, one of the key ingredients for poetic success. Crucially here it is not social interaction that leads to this kind of 'motion', but rather the absence of it. Although STC desired society, it was in fact his want for society that generated the restlessness necessary to his writing.

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.180.

<sup>69</sup> *BL*, II, p.18.

## II. STC and 'the *juxtaposition of Space*'

Neil Vickers argues that the early 1800s were a key moment in STC's philosophical development; it was in these years that STC lost his health for good, precipitating a phenomenological crisis explored in detail in his notebooks, letters and poetry. Vickers suggests that 'medicine was the linchpin for a series of new departures in Coleridge's thinking', and that his ill health after 1800 provided the means through which he 'develop[ed] his aesthetic and philosophical ideas'.<sup>70</sup> As Roe has argued, 'scientific speculation and poetry had been intensely complementary aspects of [STC's] imaginative life' for some time.<sup>71</sup> STC's philosophical thinking grew out of a late eighteenth-century approach to medicine, which was, in Kevis Goodman's words, a 'Janus-faced phenomenon' which projected the outside inward.<sup>72</sup> STC's medical knowledge, compiled through his own experiences, his reading and his correspondence with the likes of Tom Wedgwood, Thomas Beddoes and Humphry Davy, informed his philosophies of space. Indeed, STC's symptoms often mimicked Wedgwood's,<sup>73</sup> and it is not insignificant that Beddoes's recommended treatment to alleviate Wedgwood's tuberculosis was confinement in a small space (he suggested a cow-house would be ideal; Wedgwood opted instead for Martinique).<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, STC's association with these men encouraged him to use his own body as a form of 'experiment'.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Vickers, *Coleridge and the Doctors*, pp.3-4.

<sup>71</sup> Nicholas Roe, 'Introduction: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Sciences of Life', in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Sciences of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.13.

<sup>72</sup> Kevis Goodman, "'Uncertain Disease": Nostalgia, Pathologies of Motion, Practices of Reading', *Studies in Romanticism*, 49.2 (2010), pp.197-229; p.209.

<sup>73</sup> Vickers, *Coleridge and the Doctors*, pp.120-21.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p.113.

<sup>75</sup> Noel B. Jackson, 'Critical Conditions: Coleridge, "Common Sense", and the Literature of Self-Experiment', *ELH*, 70.1 (2003), pp.117-49; p.125.



After 1802, STC began to diagnose several of his ailments, including his stomach complaints, as being psychic in origin.<sup>76</sup> He began to think that opiates may not be the only cure for his stomach illnesses, and, as 'The Pains of Sleep' implies, he started to suspect that opium might be to blame – at least in part – for his night terrors (*STCPW*, I.2, pp.753-55). Vickers finds in STC's changing opinions about his own illnesses a move away from Erasmus Darwin's medical theories and towards those of Thomas Beddoes and William Cullen.<sup>77</sup> Vickers suggests that this philosophical move indicated an increased interest in nervous illnesses and the spaces in which they were treated, and I argue that these two interests found a unified expression in STC's agoraphobic descriptions.

In the weeks leading up to his departure from the Lake District in early 1804, STC began to develop a complex formula for his experiences of space. He read Kant for the first time in December 1803,<sup>78</sup> and his definitions of space reveal the philosopher's influence. His notebooks suggest that several months of thinking on the matter – beginning around August 1803 – came to an important crux at the beginning of 1804 whilst he was staying with the Wordsworths. Early in the morning on 9 January 1804, STC awoke from one of his frequent night terrors. This period was one of the worst health crises of his life; he had recognised that he was addicted to opium,<sup>79</sup> and he was about to leave friends and family to go to Malta, from whence he

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<sup>76</sup> Vickers, *Coleridge and the Doctors*, p.99. Vickers notes elsewhere that STC coined the term 'psychosomatic' ('Before Depression: Coleridge's Melancholia', p.88).

<sup>77</sup> Vickers, *Coleridge and the Doctors*, p.135. STC did not discount Darwin entirely, however; Vickers observes that 'Beddoes' mentalist account of nervous disease became central to [STC's] understanding of his *stomach* complaints while Darwin the materialist was appointed alpha and omega on his *psychological* distresses' (p.133).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p.157.

<sup>79</sup> Alethea Hayter, *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968; repr. 1971), p.192.

was convinced he would not return. He had left Keswick on 20 December 1803, alongside the three-year-old Derwent, and gone to stay at Town End for a night or two. Inevitably, the visit was substantially extended: STC was convinced he could not depart for London because of his numerous health problems which would, he said, be made worse by the persistent rain.<sup>80</sup> In fact, this reluctance to leave might be read as a sign of STC's agoraphobic, Wordsworthian response to the City at this time, although Molly Lefebure claims that STC found the City less claustrophobic than the Lakes.<sup>81</sup> (Margaret Drabble suggests that Wordsworth experienced a kind of agoraphobia whenever he left Grasmere.)<sup>82</sup> In the end, STC did not leave Town End until 14 January 1804, when Wordsworth walked with him 'almost to Troutbeck'.<sup>83</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that in cramped conditions in someone else's domestic sphere, STC should have been thinking about his own experiences of space. With the two Coleridges, Sara Hutchinson and William, Mary, Dorothy and baby Johnnie Wordsworth, the tiny cottage was rather crowded. The day after STC left, Dorothy wrote to Catherine Clarkson to apologise for the long delay in writing back to her, but, she explained, there had been too much else to do. STC woke the entire household on several occasions with nightmare-induced screaming, and his poor nights' sleep meant he often slept during the day, a habit which disrupted everyone else since he and Derwent were sleeping in the living room.<sup>84</sup> Dorothy complained that he wanted broth or coffee or something 'continually'.<sup>85</sup> Meanwhile, Derwent's

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<sup>80</sup> Letter: STC to Robert Southey, 13 January 1804, in *CL*, II, pp.1028-31.

<sup>81</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.189.

<sup>82</sup> Margaret Drabble, *A Writer's Britain: Landscape in Literature* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p.62.

<sup>83</sup> Letter: Dorothy Wordsworth to Catherine Clarkson, 15 January 1804, in *Early Letters*, p.358.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

bad behaviour had a deleterious effect on Johnnie, much to Dorothy's disapproval.<sup>86</sup> STC had been suffering badly with gout and stomach problems. He was convinced that he, like Tom Wedgwood, had developed scrofula (or what would now be known as lymphatic tuberculosis).<sup>87</sup> Both the suspected scrofula and his stomach problems focused STC's thoughts on his body as an ineffective boundary, a site where notions of internal and external were constantly complicated by his lack of control over his body's excretions.<sup>88</sup> Simultaneously, his guilt regarding his perpetual procrastination over leaving, and concerns about where he might go from London, meant that the world beyond the borders of Town End seemed like a more than usually threatening place.

Nevertheless, STC found this stay to be an intellectually productive time. He wrote to Southey the night before he left that

my mind has been very active, & I have filled (since I have been at Grasmere) a full Third of that *large* Metallic Pencil Pocket-Book with Hints, Thoughts, Facts, Illustrations, &c &c – the greater number relating to my Comforts & Consolations.<sup>89</sup>

Although at the beginning of the nineteenth century STC's professional narrative tended to be one of failure due to ill health,<sup>90</sup> in this case his sickness seems to have been the spur for a time of successful philosophical development. The letter implies a connection between STC's confinement and his productivity; the brackets around

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.356.

<sup>87</sup> Letter: STC to Robert Southey, 13 January 1804, in *CL*, II, pp.1028-31.

<sup>88</sup> Vickers, *Coleridge and the Doctors*, p.86.

<sup>89</sup> Letter: STC to Robert Southey, 13 January 1804, in *CL*, II, p.1031, original emphasis.

<sup>90</sup> Grinnell, p.59.

'since I have been at Grasmere' perhaps reconstruct the walls of the cottage on the page, echoing his physical confinement in his writing and indicating the connection between his claustrophilia and creativity. The notebook itself is bounded yet capacious, and STC's offhand '&c &c' indicates a similar relationship between expansive thought and contracted expression. Paul Cheshire uses this letter as evidence that 'the growing hoard of his notebook writing was a useful defence against accusations of indolence'; since STC's notebooks were private documents he could claim to be working without actually having to produce any evidence.<sup>91</sup> In this instance, however, the notebooks confirm that this period of confinement was productive, even if the projected work – the 'Comforts and Consolations' – would not appear in print until they emerged in 1809 as an essay in *The Friend*.<sup>92</sup> The 'Comforts and Consolations' did, however, focus STC's mind on the philosophical potential of his experiences of physical suffering. The state of his health was a key topic in the entries for this time, but his 'Consolations' mask deeper phenomenological concerns that he would spend the remainder of his life considering. The 'Hints, Thoughts, Facts, Illustrations, &c &c' each develop his theories about being in space which would only begin to find a published voice in the *Biographia Literaria* over a decade later, and, later still, in *Aids to Reflection*.

On 9 January 1804, STC made no less than 13 entries in his notebook, although he confessed guiltily that he was supposed to be annotating Malthus (CN, I.1832). These entries explore different aspects of STC's sense of himself as a bounded

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<sup>91</sup> Paul Cheshire, 'Coleridge's Notebooks', in *The Oxford Handbook to Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, pp.288-306; p.293.

<sup>92</sup> According to Vickers; see *Coleridge and the Doctors*, p.5.

individual, and express his search for, in Anya Taylor's words, 'the cohesive force that binds the multiple aspects of the self together'.<sup>93</sup> Several options seemed to be available to him in this quest for unity: social bonds, emotional stability and physical control. STC's attitudes towards his relationships with other members of the household imply the extent to which his personal sense of space was intrinsically bound up with his relationships to those around him; as Taylor asserts, STC 'represents his inner self as incomplete and yearning for completion either from another human being or from a comforting God'.<sup>94</sup> At this point, STC seems to be enacting an agoraphobic response to space whilst simultaneously adopting an agoraphilic need for social interaction.

Meanwhile, STC's heightened awareness of his skin, thanks to his self-diagnosed scrofula, suggests a focus on the bodily limits which seemed to be failing him. Sara Ahmed argues that the skin is 'a border or boundary, supposedly holding or containing the subject inside and the other outside'.<sup>95</sup> This distinction is troubled, however, when the subject believes themselves to be suffering from scrofula. This disease emphasised the porousness of the boundary between STC as a physically 'contained' individual and the external world. Indeed, according to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century medical theory, recovery from scrofula depended upon the breakdown of the boundary between internal and external. Darwin provided a

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<sup>93</sup> Anya Taylor, 'Coleridge's Self-Representations', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, pp.107-24; p.111.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.121.

<sup>95</sup> Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2000), p.44.

neat summary of contemporary medical opinion in 1794 when he wrote in *Zoönomia* that

[w]hen the belly [...] becomes torpid, the fluid absorbed by its mouth stagnates, and forms a tumour in the gland. This disease is called scrophula [sic]. If these glands suppurate externally, they gradually heal; if they suppurate without opening on the external habit, as the mesenteric glands, a hectic fever ensues, which destroys the patient.<sup>96</sup>

Vickers observes that the physicians with whose work STC was most familiar thought that most cases of scrofula were mesenteric scrofula. Thomas Beddoes noted that there was 'scarce any species of chronic disease which has not, at one time or another, been observed to derive its origin from a scrophulous cause'.<sup>97</sup> Beddoes believed that the body was in itself a form of imprisonment.<sup>98</sup> As his own and his contemporaries', including STC's, experiments on their own bodies make clear, however, it was a form of incarceration that was necessary for the scientific, poetic and philosophical advancement of the self. STC's 'scrophulous' concerns at the beginning of 1804 explain his heightened concentration on his skin as an imperfect boundary. If for STC 'inwardness is [...] a form of sensuous cognition integrally related to the process of self discovery',<sup>99</sup> then this breakdown of his bodily boundaries – and the resulting disruption to his ability to maintain 'inwardness' – echoed a failure in his quest to know the self. STC's anxiety over the breach of these boundaries is manifest in his writings from this time. Scrofula, alongside his

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<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Vickers, *Coleridge and the Doctors*, p.86.

<sup>97</sup> Vickers, *Coleridge and the Doctors*, p.86.

<sup>98</sup> Grinnell, pp.37-38.

<sup>99</sup> Jackson, 'Critical Conditions', pp.119-20.

associated stomach complaints, provided a means through which to express his sense of himself as falling, almost literally, apart.

To put it differently, the entries for 9 January expand upon what Kathleen Coburn describes as a 'psychological event' (CN, I.1823n) about which STC had written to Southey the previous summer. In a letter dated 14 August 1803, STC described

a state of mind, wholly unnoticed, as far as I know, by any Physical or  
Metaphysical Writer hitherto, & which yet is necessary to the explanation of  
some of the most important phaenomena of Sleep & Disease / it is a  
transmutation of the *succession* of *Time* into the *juxtaposition* of *Space*[.]<sup>100</sup>

STC draws an explicit connection between the individual's 'state of mind', the 'phaenomena' of his bodily experience and the world around him. He begins to articulate what Merleau-Ponty famously termed a 'phenomenology of perception', whereby the individual's experience is predicated upon an interconnection between imaginative and physical processes.<sup>101</sup> Josie Dixon implies that STC's poor state of health in the early 1800s was due in part to a breakdown in his ability to perceive the world: '[e]ach successive bout of dejection suffered in the early 1800s seems to turn on some version of this imaginative dilemma, when the balance of the eye and the mind is destabilised'.<sup>102</sup> Confined within the walls of Town End by the limits of his diseased and sleepless body, STC's stay at the Wordsworth's was the ideal setting to reconsider this destabilised position in his physical, imaginative and poetic worlds.

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<sup>100</sup> Letter: STC to Robert Southey, 14 August 1803, in *CL*, II, p.974, original emphasis.

<sup>101</sup> See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

<sup>102</sup> Josie Dixon, 'The Notebooks', in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, pp.75-88; pp.83-84.

The key relationship which defines these positions is that between time and space, but it is within space that multiple versions of the self can be recognised simultaneously. As STC begins to articulate during his time at Town End, it is the connection between the specific moment in time and point in space which comprises identity: the limits of time and space provide the boundaries within which the self can be defined. For Taylor, STC's search for the completing aspect of the self – the thing it 'wants' but 'does not yet contain' – generates 'its own energy'.<sup>103</sup> She discovers a source of what STC would term 'motion' in the 'shift from fullness to need'.<sup>104</sup> In STC's notebook entries for late 1803 and early 1804, the 'energy', or 'motion', created by the synthesis of time and space allows for the simultaneous existence of multiple aspects of the self, a form of what he would later term 'unity in *multeity*'.<sup>105</sup> He wrote:

I believe, that what we call *motion* is our consciousness of motion, arising from the interruption of motion = the acting of the Soul resisted./ . Free unrestricted action (the going forth of the Soul) Life without Consciousness, properly infinite, i.e. unlimited – for whatever resists, limits, & vice versa / This is (psychologically speaking) SPACE. The sense of resistance or limitation TIME – & MOTION is a Synthesis of the Two. The closest approach of Time to Space forms co-existent Multitude (CN, I.1771, original emphasis).

In short, 'space and time are aspects of the difference(s) between an object and itself'.<sup>106</sup> When psychological space is most bounded by the limits of time the self can

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<sup>103</sup> Taylor, 'Coleridge's Self-Representations', p.123.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p.121.

<sup>105</sup> 'Theory of Life', *STCSW*, I, p.510, original emphasis.

<sup>106</sup> Timothy Morton, 'An Object-Oriented Defense of Poetry', *New Literary History*, 43.2 (2012), pp.205-26; p.214.



recognise a 'co-existent Multitude'; that is, numerous potentialities of the self which do not conflict. It is the interaction between this 'co-existent Multitude' that generates 'motion', or the development of the soul.

Motion is an age-old concern,<sup>107</sup> but it was re-invigorated in the Romantic era.<sup>108</sup> In Zenoan philosophy, a body can only be perceived through the motion it creates, and for Hegel and Spinoza, motion is a crucial connective force without which disintegration is inevitable.<sup>109</sup> For the Romantics, as Miranda Burgess and Kevis Goodman have observed, rapid developments in transportation technologies, and the sometimes hostile responses to them, made clear the concerns regarding the nature of motion in the industrial age.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, in Romantic thinking motion is a central ontological and phenomenological concern; for medical writers like Darwin, the 'motions of the organ[s]' were the primary factors in the individual's experience of being in space.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, STC's definition of motion arose out of his medical experiences.<sup>112</sup>

For STC, motion is the sensation of 'presence & absence rapidly alternating' (CN, I.1771). It is the psychological expression of an ontological contingency; that is, it

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<sup>107</sup> Daryl W. Palmer provides a helpful summary of the development of motion in Western philosophy. See 'Motion and Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*', *Philosophy and Literature*, 30.2 (2006), pp.540-55.

<sup>108</sup> For an important examination of motion in the early Romantic period, see Marjorie Levinson, 'A Motion and a Spirit: Romancing Spinoza', *Studies in Romanticism*, 46.4 (2007), pp.367-410.

<sup>109</sup> Florian Cajori, 'History of Zeno's Arguments on Motion: Phases in the Development of the Theory of Limits', *The American Mathematical Monthly*, 22.6 (1915), pp.179-86; p.180.

<sup>110</sup> See Miranda Burgess, 'Transport: Mobility, Anxiety, and the Romantic Poetics of Feeling', *Studies in Romanticism*, 49.2 (2010), pp.229-62, and Goodman, "'Uncertain Disease": Nostalgia, Pathologies of Motion, Practices of Reading', p.208.

<sup>111</sup> Erasmus Darwin, *Zoönomia or The Laws of Organic Life* (1794), in *The Collected Writings of Erasmus Darwin*, Vol. V (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004), pp.25-26. Quoted in Nicholas Williams, "'Glad Animal Movements": Motion in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and "The Two-Part Prelude"', *Partial Answers*, 10.1 (2012), pp.11-29; p.16.

<sup>112</sup> See Kevis Goodman, 'Reading Motion: Coleridge's "Free Spirit" and its Medical Background', *European Romantic Review*, 26.3 (2015), pp.349-56.

works to create a sense of self through a perpetual reminder of what the self is not, as well as what it is or might become. We might think of the 'fluttering stranger' in 'Frost at Midnight', which serves to remind the poet of the absences which make up his present experience (l.26, *STCPW*, I.1, p.455). For Mary Jacobus, motion 'becomes uncanny when it is unsettled from the latinate abstraction into an indeterminate physicality'.<sup>113</sup> When the 'going forth of the Soul' is rendered in unbounded physical terms, it becomes a reminder of 'that originating death'. The 'co-existent Multitude' might then be a series of what Jacobus calls 'ghostly presences'.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, motion is the 'life' of poetic genius;<sup>115</sup> in Wordsworth's Spinozan terms, it is this life which 'rolls through all things' ('Tintern Abbey', l.102, *PWW*, II, p.262), connecting the poet with his surroundings and the God who created them. STC and Wordsworth built their poetic theories on a Darwinian premise; as Sharon Lattig points out, '[i]n classifying the faculty of perception as the primary imagination upon which the creative secondary is built, Wordsworth understood, with the more critically inclined Coleridge, that original experience is available only perceptually or via a homologous act of conception'.<sup>116</sup> As STC's thinking on the subject developed, motion took on a Spinozan importance. In autumn 1807, STC summarised that 'Rest=Enjoyment, and Death! Motion=Enjoyment and Life!' (*CN*, II.3156). His physical indolence and perceived lack of literary activity were finding expression in his philosophical definitions.

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<sup>113</sup> Mary Jacobus, 'Wordsworth and the Language of the Dream', *ELH*, 46.4 (1979), pp.618-44; p.628.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *BL*, II, p.18.

<sup>116</sup> Sharon Lattig, 'The Perception of Metaphor and the Metaphor of Perception: The Neurodynamics of Figuration', *Intertexts*, 9.1 (2005), pp.23-44; p.25.

The key moment in the development of STC's agoraphobic poetics occurred eighteen months after he had deplored his lack of activity in 'Dejection: An Ode', when STC sat with his candle in the Wordsworths' tiny living room in the small hours of 9 January 1804. His physical world seemed to have contracted to the space illuminated by the flame (in itself a key metaphor for his idea of motion in the notebook entries of this time).<sup>117</sup> The scene reaffirmed his opinion of the importance of motion in the individual's sense of space; as he had written ten days earlier in his report on one of his bodily experiments, motion consists of continual presence in the 'Eye' and perpetual absence in the 'Feeling' (CN, I.1771). The motion of the candle flame reminded STC of the interactive network of which he was a part.<sup>118</sup> The narrow world lit by the candle reiterated the importance of closely felt limits to STC's interpretation of the everyday world. Contracted boundaries became the key means by which STC could recognise his 'coexistent Multitude':

"Coarctation" not a bad phrase for that narrowing in of Breadth on both sides,  
as in my Interpolation of Schiller – and so on –

The narrowing Line of Daylight that ran after

The closing Door, &c. <Vide the last page of this Book.>

Of the † Coarctation of ~~×~~ Time into ‡ Space my own Image/

† This tho' written in the Dark again started up out of Sleep, & of course

while I was at it inebriated with its fumes + ΩPM is worth an after



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<sup>117</sup> Jackson notes that this metaphor had its roots in Kant and was developed more fully by STC in *Biographia Literaria* ('Critical Conditions', p.131).

<sup>118</sup> Levinson demonstrates how interaction and community were fundamental pillars of Spinoza's idea of motion: 'Everything that moves – which is everything – is at once self-moved (viz. its conatus) but every "self" or singular body is also an effect of the striving, pulsating whole' (p.381).

consideration/ by space I meant co-existent multitude – in this instance of

Images of my own self, which appeared to gain their existence by the

narrowing of a  into a  so as to gain in Latitude what it loses in length. (one might express it by the Horizontalizing of the Perpendicular but this was not the feeling)

✕ Mental Time

‡ Mental Space constituent of Genius, Wordsworth's Genius illustrates & egrege etiam egregiorum the Latter (CN, I.1823).

What STC describes here is the ontological effect of the infinite divisibility of space, and this notebook entry reveals the effect of STC's reading of Kant and Leibnitz (CN, I.1823n). It is an instance of the 'enjoyment of words' which H.J. Jackson and Nicholas Halmi find in STC's works, where STC adapts an existing term for a specific, personal meaning.<sup>119</sup> Elsewhere, STC wondered if words were anything more than the 'articulated Sighs of a Prisoner heard from his Dungeon' (CN, II.2998), and in this case he was careful to select a word that implied the style of incarceration as well as his own response to it.

According to Coburn, coarctation is a term which dates back to 1525, and means 'the action of compressing tightly or narrowly' (CN, I.1823n).<sup>120</sup> The OED records that it is now used predominantly in medical discourses, particularly

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<sup>119</sup> H.J. Jackson, 'Coleridge, Etymology and Etymologic', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44.1 (1983), pp.75-88, and Nicholas Halmi, 'Coleridge on Allegory and Symbol', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, pp.345-58.

<sup>120</sup> In fact, the OED dates the term slightly later, to 1545; see 'coarctation, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1891) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/35119?redirectedFrom=coarctation>> [accessed 14 May 2013].

regarding the coronary arteries.<sup>121</sup> By the Romantic period, it had been in use as a medical term for well over a century, and it is possible that STC first came across it during the time he spent with his brother, Luke, on the wards at Guy's Hospital in the late 1780s.<sup>122</sup> As well as its medical significance, 'coarctation' worked phonetically to capture STC's meaning. The letter 'r' was an important one for Socrates, who suggested that the 'great imposer of names' used the letter 'because, as I imagine, he had observed that the tongue was most agitated and least at rest in the pronunciation of this letter, which he therefore used to express motion'.<sup>123</sup> In STC's notebook entry, 'coarctation' thus neatly encapsulates both his concerns with his body and his recent focus on the role of motion in the development of the philosophical self.

The 'narrowing in of breadth' that STC imagines here anticipates the 'narrow interspaces' and 'sense of imprisonment' that Graham Davidson has revealed to be important in STC's later works,<sup>124</sup> and a similarly productive, Bachelardian tension is revealed between 'coarctation' and expansion. STC is reminded of his translation of Wallenstein's *Piccolomini*, when Thekla visits the astronomy tower (*Piccolomini*, Act II Scene 4, ll.85-86, *STCPW*, III.1, p.361). In parentheses, he makes clear the connection between Thekla's experience of the tower and his of the Wordsworths' living room: the 'last page of this book' is, as Coburn observes, found at the sketches of the guttering candle. For STC as well as Thekla the light acts as the boundary around the

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Richard Holmes notes that, for a time under his brother Luke's influence, STC hoped to become a surgeon (*Coleridge: Early Visions* (London: Harper Perennial, 1989; repr. 2005), p.29).

<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Palmer, p.544.

<sup>124</sup> Graham Davidson, 'Work Without Hope', *Wordsworth Circle*, 45.1 (2014), pp.21-29; pp.23-24.

individual's perception of the world. It is thanks to the 'motion' discovered in this 'Coarctation of Time into Space' that STC locates his 'own image'.

For STC, imagining the self spatially allows for the recognition of the 'co-existent multitude'. Perhaps conversely, STC's co-existence is only realised when that space is a constricted one: his plurality of selves can only 'co-exist' when defined by a 'coarctation' of boundaries that is accompanied by disorientation. It is through this disturbing sense of 'motion' that he recognises the 'existence' of multiple 'Images of [his] own self'. He uses the Aristophanic asteriskos, a notation used by early Homeric scholars to denote a repeated line,<sup>125</sup> to connect 'Time' to 'Mental Time'. During his travels in the Mediterranean, STC increasingly used the asteriskos like the more usual asterisk, and this entry seems to be its earliest appearance in STC's notebooks.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, it neatly illustrates the relationship between time and space that STC describes here. The lines of the cross suggest the boundaries imposed by time onto space; each line indicates a different sequence of potentialities or, in Esteesian terms, different routes for the soul's potential motion. If the dots around the centre of the cross each indicate one of the 'co-existent multitude', the *asteriskos* implies the relationship between them; separated by chronological or spatial limits, they can still co-exist in the phenomenological world. These different 'Images' of the self are drawn into unity by the space they simultaneously occupy, at the point at which time and space are brought into the closest connection; that is, in the body itself. The body

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<sup>125</sup> Francesca Schironi, 'The Ambiguity of Signs: Critical σημεία from Zenodotus to Origen', in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters*, ed. by Maren R. Niehoff (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp.87-112; p.90.

<sup>126</sup> Although he used the symbol in 1801 to point out deficiencies in William Godwin's language when he proofread the unpublished play *Abbas, King of Persia* (1801). See Letter: STC to William Godwin, 8 July 1801, in *CL*, II, pp.742-43.

becomes a type of what Bachelard terms 'intimate space';<sup>127</sup> it is the locus of co-existentialism that is necessary to the perception of the self.<sup>128</sup> STC becomes, to use Bloom's description of Browning, both 'subject and object of his own quest'.<sup>129</sup>

STC's quest, at this early stage in the development of his terms, is to define the psychological area through which he must imaginatively travel. The boundaries of this space do not remain stable: 'one might express it by the Horizontalizing of the Perpendicular but this was not the *feeling*'. The lack of full stop reinforces STC's inability to conclusively define his understanding, and the several ways (changes in phrasing and the attempts to sketch the experience) he tries to articulate it suggest his difficulty in defining this psychological space. Arguably, the elusive description of his experience as being 'the Horizontalizing of the Perpendicular' removes STC from what Ingram terms the 'perspectives of sanity'.<sup>130</sup> It anticipates the 'feelings of unreality' or 'depersonalisation' which sufferers describe as defining a panic attack.<sup>131</sup> STC's phrase neatly captures the experiences of a diagnosed agoraphobe's sense of space dissolving around them; sufferers frequently describe the ways in which their perspective seems to close in or expand, as Davidson demonstrates.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, it emphasises that STC's experiences of being in space are predicated upon his phenomenological perception of the objects around him.

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<sup>127</sup> Bachelard, p.190.

<sup>128</sup> Recognition of a 'co-existent multitude' is, according to Merleau-Ponty, the only way of perceiving an 'absolute object' or, in this case, an absolute self (p.81).

<sup>129</sup> Browning, Bloom argues, was 'perfectly delighted' for this to be the case, and 'rejoiced always that there were so many of him, so many separate selves happily picnicking together in a single psyche' (*Poetry and Repression*, p.182).

<sup>130</sup> Ingram, p.104.

<sup>131</sup> Davidson quotes from DSM.IV, which identifies a condition titled 'Panic Disorder with Agoraphobia' (*Phobic Geographies*, p.11).

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p.79.

The notebook form itself supports the construction of an agoraphobic space; as Dixon recognises, the notebooks become for STC a 'site of secrecy and discovery, which offers a refuge from the anxieties and failures of the public sphere'.<sup>133</sup> Of course, the room in which he writes serves to remind him of the potential success to be discovered in employing an agoraphobic poetics, and his own perceived failure in doing so. For STC, 'Mental space [is] constituent of Genius', but mental space is built out of perceptions of the real world, reimagined to suit the poet's imaginative purpose. STC believed that Wordsworth's imagination was at its most free when at its most confined. Like Drabble, Karen Swann finds a form of agoraphobia expressed in 'Salisbury Plain'; she suggests that for the Sailor 'the Plain is an uncomfortably public place'.<sup>134</sup> However, she finds a pattern in the Sailor's response to his social encounters: 'a violent start, a loss of power, and a resumption of the way'.<sup>135</sup> In other words, the Sailor recovers – and the poem continues – when he rediscovers his 'motion'. Even in the middle of Salisbury Plain, isolation proves to be impossible. The Sailor must construct his identity in reference to his encounters with others, which in turn influence his response to the landscape. STC likewise indicates that Wordsworth's 'Genius' is founded upon mastery of expressing himself using descriptions of coarctated boundaries, including those which enclose the tiny cottage.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Dixon, p.75.

<sup>134</sup> Drabble, p.62; Karen Swann, 'Public transport: Adventuring on Wordsworth's Salisbury Plain', *ELH*, 55.4 (1988), pp.811-34; p.811.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Grinnell suggests that around this period STC was 'dispirited' by his recurring sickness and 'a state of mental and physical deterioration perhaps exacerbated or caused by the painful recognition' of Wordsworth's apparently superior genius (p.59).



As I will now argue, the later Coleridges utilised agoraphobic poetics to manage their interactions with their precursors and with their surroundings. They employed an agoraphobic response to imaginative space in order to assert their personal poetic boundaries. They sought to adapt the poetic landscape built largely by their forebears, without losing their individual poetic autonomy. As Trotter concludes, '[p]hobia particularizes anxiety, to the point at which it can be felt and known *in its particularity*, and thus counteracted or got around'.<sup>137</sup> Agoraphobia could be greatly disabling; indeed, Trotter notes that '[a]goraphobia has been said to constitute the most disabling of all phobias'.<sup>138</sup> Yet, responding to or circumventing it was creatively enabling. As a poetic conceit it emphasised the poet's construction – defensive or offensive – of their own creative boundaries and expressed an anxiety over the individual's ability to 'manage' the limits of their self-identity through articulation of their personal phenomenological space.<sup>139</sup>

These writers were not necessarily agoraphobic in a medical sense, although like STC each of them did experience some form of spatial anxiety in the 'real' world, as I demonstrate below. Nevertheless, they used agoraphobia as a poetic 'performance' which, to use Davidson's words, had repercussions for their 'perception (and creation) of the 'external' spaces of their life-worlds'.<sup>140</sup> The poetics on display here alternate – sometimes rapidly – between claustrophobia and agoraphobia. Regardless, retreat from the real world into the poetic is reflected in the language of an agoraphobic retreat from social space. In these cases, it is a retreat

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p.114, original emphasis.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p.31.

<sup>139</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, p.54.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p.23.

from the poetic social space dominated by STC and Wordsworth into autonomous imaginative domains controlled by the individual poet.

The Coleridge family's poetics confirm the extent to which their notions of their individual identities were heavily influenced by the places in which they lived. The phobic tendencies I find in their poetry emphasise the connection between their senses of self, the places of their experience, and their writing. As Davidson has shown, discourses of spatial phobias exaggerate the connection between space and identity, but also have 'the potential to elucidate this dialectic'.<sup>141</sup> Like STC, their bodies worked alongside the buildings in which they were housed to reinforce the poets' notions of their status as bounded beings. Simultaneously, however, both the body and the building also encouraged and inspired imaginative excursions beyond those physical boundaries. In the following sections of this chapter I indicate ways in which bodies and buildings were imaginatively important to STC's children, and how an agoraphobic poetics was used productively to delineate individual poetic spaces.

### **III. The 'subtle intricate labyrinth' of the body at home**

In STC's notebooks, sexual fantasies and hypochondriacal illnesses are manifestations of a phobic reaction to the body as the object which binds the inner self, and his children articulated similarly fraught responses to their bodies. For Sara, the body was a 'subtle intricate labyrinth', a site of imprisonment that also contained potentially infinite phenomenological possibilities.<sup>142</sup> The Minotaur at the centre was the threat of loss of control. Sara suffered from debilitating bouts of dejection; the

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>142</sup> Sara Coleridge, 'Nervousness', in Mudge, pp.201-16; p.202.

majority of her married life was spent dealing with what she called her 'nervousness', but most critics now agree was post-natal depression.<sup>143</sup> Hartley, meanwhile, seemed even more than Sara to parallel his father's addiction problems: by 1822 his alcoholism was already evident and remained a concern for his mother, the Wordsworths and his landlord (who frequently had to go and recover Hartley from drunken slumbers in ditches around Ambleside) for the rest of his life.<sup>144</sup>

In short, if the Coleridge surname bound the family into a legacy of daunting poetic genius, it also tied them to an inheritance overshadowed by bodily infirmity and an apparent lack of self-control. Like STC, they attempted to mask their bodily infirmities by removing themselves from social spaces. The places in which they could explore their disorders were textual; they confined their bodies within set geographical limits whilst containing their explorations of self in textual or poetic spaces. If 'the body is where the appropriation of space occurs',<sup>145</sup> then illness or addiction is troubling for the sufferer's phenomenological existence. '[D]eterminations of health' became the means through which individuals mapped their own bodies,<sup>146</sup> and by extension the world around them. As STC's notebook entries from the early 1800s and Sara's diary entries from the 1830s suggest,<sup>147</sup> a breakdown in bodily health resulted in a disordering of the individual's

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<sup>143</sup> See Dennis Low, *The Literary Protégées of the Lake Poets* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), p.121; Peter Swaab, 'Sara Coleridge: Poems and Their Addresses', *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 33 (2009), pp.45-64; p.47; Barbeau, *Life and Thought*, p.52; Waldegrave, *Poets' Daughters*, p.69.

<sup>144</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.297.

<sup>145</sup> Merleau-Ponty, p.178.

<sup>146</sup> Grinnell, p.12.

<sup>147</sup> David B. Ruderman examines Sara's portrayals of her post-natal mental health in her diaries in 'Breathing Space: Infancy and Aesthetics in 19th-Century British Poetry and Poetics' (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2008), pp.146-91 <[http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/61763/druderma\\_1.pdf?sequence=1](http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/61763/druderma_1.pdf?sequence=1)> [accessed 4 July 2014].

perceptions.<sup>148</sup> In both of these instances, ill health is intrinsically connected to the writer's containment within the home.

In agoraphobic and phenomenological discourses, the house is perceived as an extension of the self; the home is 'a space often perceived to be protective, rather than corrosive, of the agoraphobic's sense of self'.<sup>149</sup> The boundaries of the house act in place of the agoraphobe's bodily boundaries, which seem to be destabilised.<sup>150</sup> The house is removed from usual responses to the internal/external dialectic because it is perceived to be an extension of the body. Several of STC's early poems articulated the importance of the house to his poetic thought, most notably 'Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement' (*STCPW*, I.1, pp.260-63) and 'Frost at Midnight' (*STCPW*, I.1, pp.452-56). The connection between the coarctated boundaries of the home and the poet's imagination came to a crisis for STC in early 1804, and this was a process that would be repeated in his children's works. As we have seen with STC's prolonged stay at Town End, in the case of the Coleridge family bodily sickness should be read in terms of the places in which it occurred. Bachelard finds that the home becomes a convenient spatial metaphor for the individual's sense of identity, both as an autonomous being and as a part of a domestic network. Bachelard believed, as did Heidegger, that it is 'care' that 'weaves the ties that unite a very ancient past to the new epoch'. The network of feeling which such ties construct transforms the house

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<sup>148</sup> Grinnell, pp.11-12.

<sup>149</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, p.5.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p.24.

from a building into a Heideggerian 'dwelling' in which care is 'inscribed' into the objects. Only in such a place can a person 'curl up', or 'inhabit', comfortably.<sup>151</sup>

Bachelard's prediction that we always return to our childhood homes in our daydreams held true for the Coleridge children.<sup>152</sup> Greta Hall, to where the Coleridges moved when Hartley was four and where Derwent and Sara were born, provided the foundation for the Coleridge children's explorations of the external world and the ways in which it was, in Wordsworth's terms, 'fitted to the mind'.<sup>153</sup> Greta Hall provided a locus where the mind mirrored the world; it was a useful metaphor for the family's personal and imaginative interactions. In Bachelard's terms, it became a site where '[t]he vital connections between an individual and a particular place' could 'find permanent form only through the poet's connection with other poets'.<sup>154</sup> Armstrong recognises that such ties could be 'imprisoning as well as connecting'; she gives the example of Maggie Tulliver's problematic relationship to home.<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless, for the Coleridge children as for Maggie Tulliver, it was precisely this tension which encouraged the creation of alternative imaginative worlds.

The sites chosen by each member of the Coleridge family in which to 'curl up' in times of personal trouble arise out of their childhood memories of home. These sites are revealing about the writers' perceptions of their stances within the literary network that had been, for a time at least, contained within Greta Hall. Sara's refusal to leave her bedroom, Hartley's troubled relationship to the outside spaces of the

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<sup>151</sup> Bachelard, p.xxxviii; Martin Heidegger, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', in *Basic Writings*, ed. by D. F. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp.319-39.

<sup>152</sup> Bachelard, p.8.

<sup>153</sup> *Home at Grasmere*, l.821, p.105. All future references to this edition will be made in the text.

<sup>154</sup> Bachelard, p.16.

<sup>155</sup> Armstrong, 'Theories of Space and the Nineteenth-Century Novel', p.16.

Lake District and Derwent's fascination with architecture all, in different ways, allowed the siblings to imagine some kind of external control over imaginative chaos. By imagining themselves to be contained in some way within the coarctated boundaries of the home, they were able to channel their phenomenological experiences into the creation of poetic otherworlds.

When the family first relocated to the Lake District, STC wrote to his friends to boast about his new situation. He described the house to William Godwin:

[o]ur house is situated on a rising ground, not two furlongs from Keswick, about as much from the Lake Derwentwater, and about two miles from the Lake Bassenthwaite – both lakes and mountains we command. The river Greta runs behind our house, and before it too, and Skiddaw is behind us – not half a mile distant, indeed just distant enough to enable us to view it as a Whole. The garden, orchards, fields, and immediate country all delightful. I have, or have the use of, no inconsiderable collection of books.<sup>156</sup>

That the house is important to STC as a site of poetic creation is evident from his focus here: the important features are the view and his books. In fact, although he mentions the orchard and garden, his letters from this time focus almost entirely on accounts of the study and the view from his window to the poetically fertile landscape beyond.<sup>157</sup>

By contrast, when Sara recalled her 'dear' childhood home in her 'Autobiography', she focused on the house and its grounds.<sup>158</sup> Although she alludes to

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<sup>156</sup> Letter: STC to William Godwin, 8 September 1800, in *CL*, I, p.619.

<sup>157</sup> For example, see Letter: STC to Josiah Wedgwood, 24 July 1800, in *CL*, I, p.610 and Letter: STC to Robert Southey, 13 April 1801, in *CL*, II, p.717.

<sup>158</sup> *ML*, pp.40-44.

the views of 'Keswick Lake', Brow Top and Saddleback, for Sara they were not the important features of the home. She recalls how much of her childhood was spent playing on the 'rough path' beside the river Greta, and that in the garden was a gooseberry hedge, for some reason called Hartley's. She remembers the inside of the house in detail, and describes a route through the house from the kitchen through to the 'highest storey' where there was access onto the roof. Her account focuses on minutiae: the rows of clogs lined up in the mangling room, 'ranged in a row, from the biggest to the least' which 'curiously emblemized the various stages of life'; the miniatures of family members hung on the walls of Southey's study; and a 'dark apple-room, which used to be supposed the abode of a bogle'.<sup>159</sup> The passages and hallways between rooms are described, too, so that the impression is of a family home unified through a network of well-trodden pathways.

Hartley (whom Southey banned from returning to live at Greta Hall after his loss of the Oriel fellowship) wrote to Derwent that in the final years of their residence there Greta Hall became a '[h]ouse of bondage' for Sara and their mother.<sup>160</sup> Nevertheless, it was one which encouraged a type of agoraphobic productivity as part of the Romantic network constructed within its walls. Sara speaks with particular fondness of the room she shared with Sarah, and it is on 'that dear bedroom' that her memory lingers.<sup>161</sup> The bedroom was to become a fundamental place of poetic productivity in Sara's later life; it became the space in which she could work best, because whilst there she was troubled the least by her everyday domestic duties.

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<sup>159</sup> *ML*, p.43.

<sup>160</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.47.

<sup>161</sup> *ML*, p.42.

#### IV. The 'black vulture' and the canary: Sara's phobic creativity

Sara's marriage in 1829 brought about a dramatic change to her lifestyle. She moved away from Greta Hall to London, to which she had only ever been on short visits before. At Greta Hall she had been well-educated under the guidance of Southey and her mother, and, even though she was not precisely encouraged to pursue intellectual success, she was far from prevented.<sup>162</sup> Her mother noticed the difference married life had made to her daily routine:

Reading, writing, walking, teaching, messing, mountaineering, and I may add, for the latter ten years of that state, weeping were her daily occupations, with occasional visiting – now house orders, suckling, dress and undress, walking, serving, [homing?] visits and receiving, with very little study of Greek, Latin and English (no weeping) make up the role of her busy day – and her dear little soul lays down a weary head at night upon her peaceful pillow.<sup>163</sup>

The dramatic change in habits reveals Sara's shift into a different sphere; she moves from the public, social spaces of 'reading, writing, walking, teaching, messing, [and] mountaineering' to the confined domestic sphere, which allows her little opportunity to leave the house. The 'Sylph of Ulswater' quickly seemed to transform into the Angel in the House.<sup>164</sup> Initially, Sara's renouncing of the prolific reading and writing she had accomplished during her youth was a relief to her family and friends. Dorothy Wordsworth, for instance, had long been critical of Sara's unusual level of learning, and her family all worried that her intellectual exertions might have a deleterious

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<sup>162</sup> Mudge, pp.20-22.

<sup>163</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.77.

<sup>164</sup> Mudge attributes the lack of critical attention which Sara has received to her careful attempts to appear to adhere to the role of dutiful wife and daughter (p.ix).



effect on her 'delicate' health.<sup>165</sup> Sarah's relief that her daughter was turning toward more ordinary pursuits is palpable in this letter.

Newlyn writes of the Romantic period that '[t]here was a widespread and explicit association of excessive writing with women whose reproductive capacities were seen to be out of control', and this was certainly the case with Sara.<sup>166</sup> Excessive writing that fell outside the domestic space – outside, that is, of letter writing – was emblematic and symptomatic of a woman with underlying health issues, usually a hysteria of some kind. As I demonstrated earlier, it is significant that by the end of the century 'primary' agoraphobia was associated with men of letters; poor mental health seemed the inevitable consequence of too much time spent with books. For women, Sara included, the search for intellectual liberty had to be conducted from within the boundaries of the domestic sphere, and could not be seen to disrupt the body's normative functions and limits. Agoraphobia, in effect, was a necessary component of women's intellectual work.<sup>167</sup>

Sarah's assessment of her daughter's mental health was misguided; her parenthetical comment that Sara no longer cried is important in revealing the extent to which Sara had closed off her body. Following Edith's birth in 1832, in one of her most severe periods of post-natal depression, Sara found that she could not cry. 'I seem sealed up,' she wrote, 'a creature doomed to despair'.<sup>168</sup> Her bodily confinement within the home is echoed by the body's exaggerated self-constraint. Her diaries, too, fall silent in this period. As Sara recognised, she needed a productive outlet for her

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<sup>165</sup> Waldegrave, *Poets' Daughters*, p.52; Mudge, p.21.

<sup>166</sup> Newlyn, *The Anxiety of Reception*, p.42.

<sup>167</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, pp.85-86.

<sup>168</sup> Quoted in Swaab, 'Poems and their Addresses', p.55.

feelings; being 'sealed up' completely only led to 'despair'. Imaginatively, at least, she needed to be able to escape the closed domestic circle of the marital home.

Sara's response to her 'nervousness' or to grief was to take to her bedroom. By the end of 1832, Sara had realised that 'hysteria' could excuse her from domestic responsibilities. Keeping to her room freed her from wifely and motherly duties and allowed her to continue her intellectual endeavours. It was a practice she continued (although to a far lesser extent) into her widowhood. Even on her death bed, she continued to deploy agoraphobic elements of her illness to grant her time to work on her literary pursuits. In the autumn of 1851, Edith wrote to Mary Stanger of Sara's 'unusual weakness and depression', although she notes that the medication was soothing her mother's nerves even if it was doing little to alleviate her pain.<sup>169</sup> A few weeks later, Derwent's wife Mary observed that Sara was 'often too low to see anyone but the old faithful Nurse – even Edith in the room is almost too much for her. And yet at intervals she reads & writes as usual – corrects proofs – & takes a lively interest in her ordinary pursuits'.<sup>170</sup> The 'and yet' is telling: it reveals that Sara's mind was not as affected by her perilous health as her continued hysterical attacks might imply. Sara's ill health is characterised by an agoraphobic rejection of society, but, like STC, it does not seem to impair her desire or ability to work; on the contrary, it assists it.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Letter: Edith to Mary Stanger, 7 October 1851, WLMS Moorsom/55/2/3, The Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

<sup>170</sup> Letter: Mary Coleridge to Mary Stanger, 22 November 1851, WLMS Moorsom/56/3/1, The Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

<sup>171</sup> See Shirley Watters, 'Airy Dreams of Father and Daughter', *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 35 (2010), pp.1-14; Jones, *A Passionate Sisterhood*, p.250; *Coleridge Fille*, pp.115-16. Griggs, however, does not detect any manipulative intent in Sara's actions, and accepts them as the straightforward response of a sick woman.

Confined by the walls of her bedroom, Sara repeatedly discovered in her self-directed imprisonment a creative freedom that was unparalleled in the rest of her married life. Like Dorothy Wordsworth, Sara discovered that 'a protected environment is a source of freedom and growth'.<sup>172</sup> Armstrong recognises that 'in Romantic poems by women there is an insistent figuring of illness as paralysis',<sup>173</sup> but there is an irony in that position: physical paralysis was juxtaposed with creative activity. Like so many of her contemporaries, not least Mary Russell Mitford (who had enlisted STC's advice for her first novel *Christina* in 1811) and Elizabeth Barrett, Sara's exaggeration of the Angel in the House ideal actually allowed for its subversion: 'in each case the author as person is engulfed by the creator as genius'.<sup>174</sup> If the two constructs – Angel in the House and author – could not comfortably co-exist, one could at least be used to mask the other. This physical confinement might have meant an imaginative constriction by which she could only write of the deeply personal events contained by the walls of her sick-room or, like Mary Russell Mitford, scenes she witnessed through the window.<sup>175</sup> Many of Sara's poems from this time do articulate her depression.<sup>176</sup> But for the poet brought up under the collective gazes of Wordsworth, Southey and STC, physical confinement did not mean imaginative

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<sup>172</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.151.

<sup>173</sup> Isobel Armstrong, 'The Gush of the Feminine: How Can We Read Women's Poetry of the Romantic Period?', in *Romantic Women Writers: Voices and Countervoices*, ed. by Paula R. Feldman and Theresa M. Kelley (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1995), pp.13-32; p.23.

<sup>174</sup> Stuart Curran, 'Women readers, women writers', in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. by Stuart Curran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.169-86; pp.183-84.

<sup>175</sup> Elaine Showalter suggests that women writers, confined to the home, could only write about their experiences within the home, including their views from the window. See 'Killing the Angel in the House: The Autonomy of Women Writers', *The Antioch Review*, 50.1/2 (1992), pp.207-20; p.212.

<sup>176</sup> Swaab, 'Poems and Their Addresses', p.47.

narrowness. On the contrary, Sara's confinement to her couch allowed her to focus on the vision from her 'inward eye' ('I wander'd lonely as a cloud', l.21, *PWW*, II, p.217).

The most prolific creative period of Sara's married life depended upon her withdrawal from her domestic sphere. In October 1836, Sara was travelling back to her home in Highgate after a stressful visit to her in-laws at Ottery St. Mary in Devon. Accounts of the precise nature of this episode vary, but the basic facts seem clear:<sup>177</sup> sending her children back to Ottery, she stopped at The Castle Inn at Ilchester to recover from some kind of anxiety attack.<sup>178</sup> Barbeau writes that Sara 'knew that she could travel no further'; he suggests that this stay was 'one of the most terrifying ordeals of her life' but, like other critics, he also recognises that this period of confinement proved 'highly productive'.<sup>179</sup> Sara remained in her bedroom there for a month, claiming that she was too ill to travel further. As Swaab comments, this was her 'most severe psychological crisis'.<sup>180</sup> Nevertheless, the protracted stay at Ilchester and the five months she subsequently remained at home convalescing were among the most creatively fruitful periods of her married life;<sup>181</sup> indeed, Waldegrave goes so far as to suggest that Sara's entire thought process shifted at this time.<sup>182</sup> At Ilchester, she finished reading over her father's *Literary Remains*, as well as Felicia Hemans's *Hymns* and Mary Howitt's moralistic verse drama *The Seven Temptations* (1834); she

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<sup>177</sup> See *Life and Thought*, pp.57-59; Low, pp.133-34; *Coleridge Fille*, p.93; Mudge, pp.88-90; Swaab, 'Poems and Their Addresses', p.47; Waldegrave, *Poets' Daughters*, pp.182-84; Watters, 'Airy Dreams of Father and Daughter', p.9, and 'Sara Coleridge and *Phantasmion*', *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 10 (1997), pp.22-38; p.35.

<sup>178</sup> Waldegrave differs from other accounts in suggesting that the children were accompanied by a Mrs. Boydell whilst the nurse, Nuck, stayed with Sara (*Poets' Daughters*, p.183).

<sup>179</sup> Barbeau, *Life and Thought*, p.58.

<sup>180</sup> Swaab, 'Poems and Their Addresses', p.47.

<sup>181</sup> Mudge, p.94.

<sup>182</sup> Waldegrave, *Poets' Daughters*, p.188.

wrote to her husband Henry Nelson Coleridge of the latter that 'Mr Wordsworth, if forced to read, would say [it was] seven temptations of his patience'.<sup>183</sup> It was here, too, that she began to work on the revisions to her fairy tale, *Phantasmion*. The stay at Ilchester, and the period of recovery following it, provided Sara with a rare opportunity to read and write uninterrupted. It was, in effect, an intellectual return to her pre-marital state.

For Sara, the 'Devonshire visit' geographically realised her spatial phobia. She wrote to Henry from Ilchester to describe her anxiety:

O this Devonshire visit has been a black vulture which for two successive summers came every now & then, as I sate in the sun, to cast grim shadow over me, & give me a sight of his beak and claws. Now he holds me down upon the ground in his horrid gripe: I am even yet struggling for breath & liberty: if I ever get alive out of his clutches I will drive the monster away and when he comes near me again he shall be received on the prongs of a pitch-fork.<sup>184</sup>

She imagines being trapped by the vulture's monstrous claws, which act as a type of coarctated boundary. The vulture pins her to the ground, removing her capacity for imaginative freedom. Significantly, however, Sara imagines her freedom to be a passive state: she 'sate in the sun'. It is the 'black vulture' who remains active; he 'came' and 'cast grim shadow' over her, giving her a glimpse of the weapons with which he will constrain her. When he does have Sara in his 'horrid gripe', however, it is she who assumes the active role. While he 'holds [her] down', she 'struggl[es]' to regain her 'liberty'. Her confinement by the 'black vulture' allows her to imagine the

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<sup>183</sup> Letter: Sara to Henry Nelson Coleridge, 23 October 1836, quoted in Low, p.133.

<sup>184</sup> Letter: Sara to Henry Nelson Coleridge, 6 November 1836, quoted in Mudge, p.91.

ways in which she will fight against her anxiety. In other words, even whilst she is 'struggling' against his claustrophobic hold, her imagination works in an agoraphobic way: being confined proves productive. Sara fears that her departure from an enclosed world exposes her to danger. As Sarah McKim Webster has argued of 'Christabel', the 'spatial metaphor generates a possibility of going out, of pushing the definition of the self into new terrain'.<sup>185</sup> But in fact, as for Christabel, it is in the enclosure that Sara gains the experience that matters; it is when she is physically bounded that she is conversely able to locate imaginative freedom. In other words, the self must be confined in order to acknowledge the imaginative possibilities which exist outside of its imprisonment.

The prospect of leaving her bedroom at the Castle Inn made her 'feel like a canary bird let out of its cage into the wild wood: in that great room, away from the bed'.<sup>186</sup> The canary is at risk in the agoraphobic world of the 'wild wood', yet it is an emblem of safety in confined spaces (most obviously the mine). Like the bird, Sara's power depended upon remaining within coarctated boundaries. Sara felt that her intellectual safety depended upon her ability to control herself.<sup>187</sup> She promised Henry that she would keep the other areas of her life tightly confined if he would only let her maintain her isolation at Ilchester for a little longer:

Say that I may rest here till my shattered nerves have recovered some degree  
of tone, and I shall be happy: but assuredly that will not be in ten days, nor

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<sup>185</sup> Sarah McKim Webster, 'Circumscription and the Female in the Early Romantics', *Philological Quarterly*, 61.1 (1982), pp.51-71; p.56.

<sup>186</sup> Quoted in Low, p.133.

<sup>187</sup> Sara's treatment of herself echoes what she could expect from medical advice at the time. Her self-confinement echoes the standard treatments for madness, including hysteria, throughout the nineteenth century. The patient was expected to learn to control themselves. See Jane Aaron, *A Double Singleness: Gender and the Writings of Charles and Mary Lamb* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

perhaps in ten weeks. For the rest of my life I would keep my expenses within the closest bounds possible. In your first letter you spoke as if my feelings, “my suffering and apprehension *for the time*” were the points in question. Is that a fair statement? O no! It is the permanent prostration of nervous power, the continual recurrence of nervous miseries & weaknesses which paralyze the body & mind that are the evil.<sup>188</sup>

Sara offers Henry a trade: if he allows her infinite time to recover now, she will promise to check her spending for the ‘rest of [her] life’. Either way, she acknowledges that her life is to be one of confinement, but she appeals to him to let her choose the way it is contained.<sup>189</sup> She changes tactics part way through, switching from an emotional appeal (‘Say that I may rest here’) to a legal one, where she presents her husband with evidence before arguing it away. (It was this kind of technical approach to discussion that Henry repeatedly asked her to leave out of her letters.)<sup>190</sup> She plays Henry, a barrister, at his own game, switching from the ‘feminine’ emotional appeal to the legalese that was Henry’s speciality, and back again to an invocation of the hysterical woman’s ‘paralyzed’ body. Sara argues that it is not the close limits of time that she fears, but the ‘*permanent* prostration of nervous power’; she fears being irremediably trapped inside the ‘subtle intricate labyrinth’. She suggests that if she can control her stay in her Ilchester room she need not fear that time will trap her forever in a ‘weak’ and ‘miserable’ body. What Sara seeks is the

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<sup>188</sup> Letter: Sara to Henry Nelson Coleridge, 19 October 1836, quoted in Mudge, p.90, original emphasis.

<sup>189</sup> Freud associated agoraphobia with married life for women (Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. II (1893-1895), Studies on Hysteria*, trans. by James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud and assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Vintage, 2001), p.112n.

<sup>190</sup> Henry wanted her to talk more on ‘news of wife and children’ and less on ‘taste and criticism’ (quoted in Mudge, p.98).

chance to heal herself, a process that depends upon her control over her bodily and imaginative limits. Understanding Sara's responses to her physical boundaries is fundamental to an appreciation of her spatial poetics.

Sara's essay 'Nervousness' reveals that she agreed with the approach of institutions like the Quaker York Retreat in treating madness. The York Retreat was amongst the earliest places to move away from physical bondage treatments towards 'moral management' by offering greater freedom and respect in return for greater self-control – or self-concealment – by the patient.<sup>191</sup> It was here that Sara's aunt Edith was sent in autumn 1834. Sara wrote her essay in this same period. It was composed as a Socratic dialogue between an 'Invalid' and a 'Good Genius', and described the importance she placed upon the patient's capacity to maintain autonomy throughout their treatment:

[a]fter some years of suffering from derangement of the nervous system, I have satisfied myself that there is no all competent tribunal without ourselves to which we who are weak & miserable, doubly bound to walk circumspectly & continually tempted to stray from the narrow path of prudence & self-control, can assuredly appeal on the subject of self-management. [...] Our advisors will differ among themselves; we *must* exert our own judgement to chuse among them; let us also exert it to review their advice.<sup>192</sup>

The 'nervous' sufferer is kept healthy by her agoraphobic tendencies. By walking 'circumspectly' and keeping to the 'narrow path of prudence', she can manage her

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<sup>191</sup> Jane Aaron, "'On Needle-Work': Protest and Contradiction in Mary Lamb's Essay", in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. by Anne K. Mellor (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp.167-84; p.177.

<sup>192</sup> 'Nervousness', in Mudge, pp.201-16; p.201, original emphasis.



own 'derangement'. But Sara is adamant that she should be allowed to define her own borders; she wants to plot the route of her 'narrow path'. Although she accepts that she must keep herself constrained, she argues that her hope of improvement lies in maintaining control over the limits of her body and mind.

Sara's thoughts about self-control were often most evident in her reflections on her role as a mother, as is implied in the ways that her post-natal depression manifested itself in agoraphobic ways. She worried about revealing her difficulties to her children and used poetry to describe her troubling thoughts to them. In her poems, Sara's children either act as reminders of her own youth,<sup>193</sup> or, taking a cue from STC's poems about the baby Hartley, she imagines for them a childhood in a Lake District landscape.<sup>194</sup> Writing during her 'confinement' before the birth of Berkeley and Florence, Sara contrasts the freedom she achieves imaginatively with the imprisonment she experiences within her pregnant body:<sup>195</sup>

In dreams an airy course I take

And seem my tedious couch to fly:

Or o'er the bosom of the lake

Ere to captivity I wake,

My skimming boat I swiftly ply ('Verses written in sickness 1833, before the Birth of Berkeley and Florence', ll.30-34, *SCP*, p.63).

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<sup>193</sup> As in 'When Herbert's Mama was a slim little Maid', *SCP*, p.97.

<sup>194</sup> See 'Edith Asleep' and 'Herbert looking at the Moon', *SCP*, pp.73-74 and pp.108-09.

<sup>195</sup> Susan Stewart, following Julia Kristeva, suggests that 'it is in pregnancy that we see the articulation of the threshold between nature and culture'. To talk of pregnancy as a 'confinement' is to emphasise the marginalised state into which the woman enters. The pregnant woman's body highlights the precarious boundary between internal and external, self and Other. It exaggerates the paradox of the body as object. (*On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1984; repr. 1993), p.x and p.104).

Sara attributes her 'captivity' to two causes: her two living children who are 'entwined' around her heart (l.7); and the 'sickening fears that overpower | This crushed but struggling heart of mine' (ll.24-25). Nevertheless, the 'tedious couch' she resents is, like Wordsworth's couch, the place which allows her 'inward eye' to roam.<sup>196</sup> It allows her to fly back to the Lake District. The lake here reminds her of childhood safety; its 'bosom' is a source of maternal comfort. The rhyme that connects 'fly' to 'ply' affirms that the 'skimming boat' across the imagined lake allows Sara vicariously to experience a sense of freedom. The action of rowing the boat is reflected in the act of writing the poem; the pen, like the imagined oar, allows Sara to escape the confines imposed by her body in the home.

Sara attributed her poetic recollections of the Lake District, including, as we will see in Chapter 3, those which inspired *Phantasmion*, to being 'confined to [her] couch indoors': '[a]s sailors in the calenture see bright green fields in the ocean, so I saw with special sadness and delight those shows of mother-earth from which I was so wholly shut out' (*SCP*, p.218n). Sara never returned to the Lake District after her marriage, but it was to her childhood home that she repeatedly returned in times of grief or depression. Being 'wholly shut out' from that landscape conversely reminded her of the 'delight' it held for her, so that although she was physically removed from them the Lakes remained the locus of her poetic being.

Sara found this kind of imaginative retreat to be indispensable throughout her difficult childbearing years, and she continued to engage with it during times of grief

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<sup>196</sup> Sara describes here an experience more familiar from Wordsworth's 'I wandered lonely as a cloud'. Barbeau makes a similar point of Sara's poem 'The Blessing of Health', in which she imagines a sick child confined to its bed. See 'Suffering Servant: Grief and Consolation in Sara Coleridge's Poems', *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 33 (2009), pp.80-88; p.84.

for the remainder of her life. After Henry's death in 1843, Sara controlled her grief using physical spatial limits which she continued to imaginatively transgress to access a more fulfilling poetic location. In the first months after his death, she found that her 'spirits' were 'much better while [she] remain[ed] shut up in [her] own room' than when she tried to go out in society. Like at Ilchester, staying within the confines of her room gave her 'the power of producing a comfortable state of feeling' in which she was 'partly out of this world'.<sup>197</sup> Within a few months, though, Sara had convinced herself of the necessity of not 'withdraw[ing]' herself 'from the world': 'I must live on in this outward scene'.<sup>198</sup> In time, she rejected completely her agoraphobic tendencies: 'I seem to crave a brightly-lighted room, and lively faces and animated conversation [...] I cannot now bear to live a quiet life – I want either society or brisk intellectual occupation to keep me from brooding'.<sup>199</sup> Edith remembered that 'when she had somewhat recovered from her great bereavement', Sara 'began again to pay visits to friends, and give and receive hospitality'.<sup>200</sup> Without Henry, Sara made a concerted effort to lead a 'rich and varied' life both intellectually and socially.<sup>201</sup>

Like her father, Sara used her 'sadness' – both her post-natal depression throughout the 1830s and grief after Henry's death – as a barrier between herself and society. For Hartley, too, sadness was one way by which he imaginatively transgressed boundaries, even whilst being confined in the same physical location.

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<sup>197</sup> Letter: Sara to Emily Trevenen, [March] 1843, quoted in Mudge, p.112.

<sup>198</sup> Letter: Sara to Mrs Henry M. Jones, 13 October 1843, in *ML*, p.207.

<sup>199</sup> Quoted in Jones, p.261.

<sup>200</sup> Edith Coleridge, *Some Recollections of Henry Nelson Coleridge and His Family* (Torquay: Fleet Printing Works, 1910), p.8.

<sup>201</sup> Katie Waldegrave, 'Sara Coleridge: A Poet Hidden,' *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 33 (2009), pp.74-79; p.77.

## V. Being 'guarded by dragons': Hartley's immense containment

Hartley's phobic development progressed in the opposite way to Sara's; he began by fighting against enclosure and ended by embracing it. He was encouraged at a young age to consider the relationship between the internal and the external. When he was five years old he explained what he perceived to be the difference between an 'acquaintance' and an 'in-quaintance' to his proud father: an 'in-quaintance', as with Hartley's feelings towards the little girl who inspired this distinction, was a much deeper bond.<sup>202</sup> Hartley had clearly been listening to his father's and Wordsworth's thoughts on the ways in which social relationships might be expressed spatially. Hartley later identified three ways of perceiving space, each of which reflected a different 'kind of [...] melancholy'. In each case, the 'psycho-physical' being subjectively altered the world around them, so that for Hartley perception was more about the subject's feelings than the 'motions' of their organs. There were

[t]hose who seek for the infinite, in contradistinction to the finite – those who seek for the infinite in the finite – and those who seek to degrade the finite by a comparison with the infinite. The first class comprehends philosophers and religionists; the second, poets, lovers, conquerors, misers, stock-jobbers &c.; and the third comprises satirists, comedians, jokers of all kinds, man-haters, and woman-haters, Epicures, and *bon-vivants* in general ('Atrabilious Reflections Upon Melancholy', *E&M*, I, p.56).

Poets are grouped alongside lovers and conquerors as colonisers of the space represented by the object they wish in some way to own. The limits of the object

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<sup>202</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.166.

remind the poet that there is infinity beyond those boundaries, just as the miser is reminded of eternal wealth by the limits of his own gold. Hartley's 'atrabilious' theory anticipates Bachelard's assertion that '[i]mmensity is within ourselves'.<sup>203</sup> Hartley increasingly rejected boundless prospects as inspirations for creativity: 'Who upon earth could ever paint the bare sea, or the desert, or the infinity of snow?' he asked. The limits of a small object contained, for the artistic mind, 'associations too vast to be contained in an acre of canvas' ('Ignoramus on the Fine Arts, No. III: Hogarth, Bewick, and Green', *E&M*, I, p.255). As Hartley's poetry suggests, the poet could respond to his quest for the 'infinite in the finite' in two ways: by either resenting the limits of the finite, or fearing the possibilities of the infinite.

In the early years of his 'exile' in the Lake District, Hartley associated his 'melancholy' with the limits of his finite world; the way that the region is divided up by the lakes and mountains reminded him of his failures. Writing to his mother in 1829, Hartley responded dejectedly to a question she had put to him 'a few mornings ago': 'What [have you] to prey upon [your] mind?' Hartley replied that he 'was not born to be happy', an answer which 'seem'd not to satisfy' Sarah. Employing what Lefebure recognises as 'the training of the Oriel common room', Hartley suggested that before he could provide an adequate response they needed to settle 'about the meaning of the term'.<sup>204</sup> What did it mean to be happy? He denied being 'incapable of enjoyment' and, on the contrary, maintained that he could 'take interest in any thing [...] however trifling [...] that I see interests others'. In other words, the limits of the

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<sup>203</sup> Bachelard, p.184.

<sup>204</sup> Molly Lefebure, *The Bondage of Love: A Life of Mrs Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: Victor Gallancz, 1986), p.245.

finite object do not matter so long as there is a social 'interest' which transcends it. He anticipated the accusation that he allowed the physical limits of the world to dictate the boundaries of his happiness. Nevertheless, Hartley's phenomenological world was dissatisfying because it appeared bounded on all sides:

The world is not to me a barren wilderness; but it is a garden, thick planted indeed, but planted with forbidden fruit, and guarded by dragons. Were I a disembodied spirit, a thing to which no being was compared, without superior or inferior, and possess'd of powers unlimited, for good or ill, I doubt not that I should be active, benevolent, and happy. But all that is human is bounded; our life is all a fruitless effort to break the chain which only death can dissolve. The wider my sympathies extend, the more I feel my helplessness; the greater my faculties of enjoyment, the more conscious I become of the state of circumscription in which I exist, and it would be but poor consolation to a man bound and hand-cuff'd so that he could not stir, to know that he possessed the power of walking. Therefore, when I say that I never can be happy, I mean that I require a larger area, or in other terms, a greater degree of liberty than is compatible with the condition of humanity, which I nevertheless could not be content to enjoy for my particular self, unless those beings were participators which sympathy had made to me a multiplied self.<sup>205</sup>

Wideness initially reminds Hartley of his 'helplessness', so that although he feels trapped by the garden, he also finds it necessary. This garden is a nightmarish version of that in which he used to play as a child at Greta Hall. STC thought that Greta Hall

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<sup>205</sup> Letter: Hartley to Sarah Fricker Coleridge, [1829], in *HCL*, pp.102-03.

was a place of 'safety' for Hartley: he noted that Hartley's '*attachments* [...] even to places' were so strong that he was reluctant to go into town or on visits. He observed that Hartley's 'Kitchen and darling Friend [Wilsy] – they are enough/ & Play fellows are burthensome to him/ excepting *me*/ because I can understand and sympathize with, his wild Fancies – & suggest others of my own'.<sup>206</sup> Lefebure notes that Hartley rarely left Greta Hall and its gardens if he could help it. Hartley's comment in later years that '[c]hildren are often misunderstood' throws doubt on STC's interpretation but, as will be seen in Chapter 3, this area provided the inspiration for, and boundaries around, Hartley's 'wild fancies'.<sup>207</sup> Hartley's vision of the 'thick planted' garden seems to substantiate Lefebure's claim that he maintained a 'horror of restraint' into adulthood,<sup>208</sup> but his ambivalent fascination with the topographical and anatomical limits that confined him was shared with several of his contemporaries. Nicholas Roe has noted that poets like Keats and Hunt – to whom can be added Blake, Shelley and Charlotte Smith – were fascinated by the poetic potential of boundaries, both physical, like coastlines or caverns, and temporal, like dusk or dawn.<sup>209</sup> Yet, in a statement that subverts High Romantic poetics, Hartley maintains that he cannot be happy while he remains 'bounded'.<sup>210</sup>

According to Bachelard, this kind of contraction 'bears the mark of a certain negativism'.<sup>211</sup> Hartley resents the boundaries imposed on him physically by his

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<sup>206</sup> Letter: STC to Sara Hutchinson, [Early Summer 1802], in *CL*, II, p.804, original emphasis.

<sup>207</sup> Quoted in Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.235.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> Roe, *John Keats*, p.13. Blake's imaginative spaces (Eden, Generation, Beulah and Ulro) were mapped on a pattern of concentric circles. For Smith the coastline was simultaneously a place of danger and possibility, whilst in Shelley's sonnet 'Ozymandias' creation is futile without limits.

<sup>210</sup> Enclosure, particularly by the scenes or buildings of the poet's childhood, was associated with a return to a protected space of innocence. See Abrams, p.194.

<sup>211</sup> Bachelard, p.136.

disappointing body and mentally by this 'thick planted' garden. This mental landscape is one which 'tends to reject and restrain, even to hide, life'.<sup>212</sup> It is guarded by 'dragons', which combine this Edenic garden with English legend. The dragons prevent knowledge of the world beyond the garden, and their presence is resented; it is possible that they are descendants of Spenser's dragon, Error. They trap Hartley in a child's fantasy world, and the adult imagines a 'disembodiment' that will remove him from the boundaries imposed by his body and this landscape. Hartley fears the connection between the two, as is suggested by his wariness over consuming the 'forbidden fruit'. He recognises, in anticipation of Bachelard, that 'immensity' (the 'infinite' in Hartley's terminology) is intimately related to contraction. For Bachelard, immensity is

attached to a sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrests, but which starts again when we are alone. As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a world that is immense. Indeed, immensity is the movement of motionless man. It is one of the dynamic characteristics of motionless daydreaming.<sup>213</sup>

Like Sara, Hartley's imaginative expansion depends on motion: as a disembodied spirit with 'powers unlimited' he could, he thinks, be 'active, benevolent, and happy'. But, as STC defined it, motion serves as a perpetual reminder of the 'bounded' human condition and Hartley's body binds him like a 'chain' to an objective world beyond which he cannot expand. Hartley identifies motion as the source of his ideal creativity: if he could be 'active' he could be 'happy'. As a being chained up by his

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p.184.



humanity, however, Hartley is 'motionless'. Unlike Sara, who 'struggles' against her black vulture, Hartley's effort to break free is 'fruitless'. Hartley's garden is the imaginative product of his stasis, but it makes him long for unbounded activity. It is related to Blake's 'Garden of Love'; in Blake's garden, too, the speaker's 'joys and desires' are bound in 'briars'. The Garden of Love is also a distorted version of the 'green' where the speaker played in his youth.<sup>214</sup> In both cases, confinement offers no comfort, because there are temptations everywhere in these 'thick planted' scenes.

By contrast, when Edith writes of a similar garden nearly sixty years later in her poem 'The Garden, written at St. Issey, July 30<sup>th</sup> 1885', its confines are a comfort: the 'ordered alleys' reflect the gardener's 'tender [...] care', and the trees 'form a verdant screen' which 'safeguard[s]' the walker and her friends from the heat of the midday sun. Edith's garden is not threatening because the 'verdant screen' does not completely enclose the speaker; she can see through its 'arch' to the 'far hills [...] Where the great sun descending seeks his rest'. She observes the outside world from a safe vantage point which allows her to assimilate external with internal. The garden is simultaneously a physical place and a phenomenological space through which she considers her outlook on life: 'So be our closing years, by God's dear grace, | A heavenly outlook from a sheltered place'.<sup>215</sup> Edith's garden affords her the view that Hartley is denied; that is, she can see to infinity from the finite boundaries (both bodily and topographical) which safely enclose her.

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<sup>214</sup> William Blake, 'The Garden of Love', *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.150.

<sup>215</sup> 'The Garden', HRC MS. Future references to manuscripts from the Harry Ransom Center will be made in the text.

The greater Hartley's imaginative expansion, the more he is reminded of the finite limits which circumscribe his experience. STC identified 'the absence of a Self' as being 'the mortal Sickness of Hartley's being',<sup>216</sup> but in fact Hartley suggests that it is rather the dilution of self which prevents him from being happy; he extends his 'sympathies' beyond human boundaries. Hartley's vision indicates a conflicted desire to, in Sally West's terms, 'look inwards and outwards simultaneously',<sup>217</sup> but he is caught in a double bind: looking imaginatively outwards reminds him of his physical containment. Esteesian 'coarctation' becomes Hartley's sense of 'circumscription', a word which moves away from the bodily connotations of STC's description towards a more cartographic way of thinking about perceptions of space. Hartley's term emphasises the interplay between internal and external landscapes. Ultimately, Hartley's 'mortal sickness' is not the 'absence of Self' but a longing for that loss. In contrast to STC, for Hartley a 'narrowing' of his perceived boundaries is damaging to his ability to locate his potentialities: a 'larger area' is required to house his 'multiplied self'.

A later sonnet expands upon Hartley's notion of a 'larger area', and suggests that this alternative is similarly malevolent. The 'larger area' does prove capable of containing a 'co-existent multitude', but the acknowledgement of multifarious selves is no longer comforting:

Dim child of darkness and faint-echoing space,

That still art just behind, and never here,

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<sup>216</sup> Draft letter: STC to John Dawes, May 1822, in *HCL*, p.73.

<sup>217</sup> Sally West, 'The limits of "perfect solipsism": Bloom's map and Shelley's dejection', in *Reading, writing and the influence of Harold Bloom*, ed. by Alan Rawes and Jonathon Shears (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp.111-32; p.112.

Death's herald shadow, unimagined Fear;  
Thou antic, that dost multiply a face,  
Which hath no self, but finds in every place  
A body, feature, voice, and circumstance,  
Yet art most potent in the wide expanse  
Of unbelief, –('Fear', ll.1-8, *HCP*, II, p.53).

Darkness and the 'larger area' give birth to one child: Fear. This is a spatial phobia, discovered in 'faint-echoing space' and 'wide expanse[s]'. As the sketches of the candle in STC's notebook entry suggest, darkness is the defining element of fear; it conceals an area which the subject knows to be of significance. The sonnet enacts the kind of 'motion' STC began to outline in late 1803; that is, it describes 'presence and absence rapidly alternating'. Specifically, this motion is locatable in the word 'art', which is repeated twice in this octet. 'Art' indicates a presence, yet its placement in this sonnet actually serves to identify an absence: fear is 'never here', has 'no self' and is at its most forceful in '*unbelief*'.

Fear realises the disembodiment Hartley had longed for; it becomes a 'co-existent multitude' unbounded by the individualising limits of the human body. In fact, it is 'most potent' in the 'wide expanse | Of unbelief'. The enjambment here works alongside the dash to illustrate the extent of that 'wide expanse'; metrically it covers the entire octet, which is composed of one sentence. The 'wide expanse' endangers a firm sense of self; it compromises the contained integrity of the line, just as negotiation of it threatens Hartley's sense of being. The sonnet concludes by acknowledging the 'dim child' as one 'face' of the poet's 'multiplied self': 'As goblin,

ghost, or fiend I ne'er have known thee, | But as myself, my sinful self, I own thee' (ll.13-14). Again, the poem confirms the dissolution of self. '[M]yself' becomes 'my sinful self', the adjective grammatically confirming that the self is disrupted by sin. The 'dim child of darkness' becomes the one image of the self that Hartley can identify. In other words, fear is the boundary by which Hartley's 'Soul' is circumscribed; it is his fear that confirms that his self is in motion. It becomes the characteristic that defines his adult identity.

Hartley's fear manifested itself most clearly in his drinking habit. Hartley was a great favourite with the locals; he was a frequent participator in the shepherds' 'murry neets', and could often be found drinking in The Red Lion in Grasmere.<sup>218</sup> Lefebure recognises that negativity defined Hartley's adult identity, but she cannot identify the causes. 'Clearly,' she writes, 'guilt heavily shadowed this labyrinthine landscape of Hartley's subconscious mind; but whose guilt? The father [...] loomed through the mists; guilt was reflected in resentment; but whose resentment?'<sup>219</sup> Lefebure implicitly recognises that Hartley's imagination depended on tight boundaries: labyrinths and mists both restrict the subject's view. Guilt was the emotion that seemed to restrict Hartley's self-control. Derwent, too, implied that it was Hartley's guilt over his treatment of his parents that drove him to drink. He wrote to Hartley to plead with him to attempt to manage his alcoholism:

Oh my Brother, need I remind you what this cruel enchantment has cost you?  
that it cuts you off from those who yearn to have you with them, to love and  
cherish you – My circumstances have ever been such that the bare possibility

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<sup>218</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, pp.296-97.

<sup>219</sup> Lefebure, *Bondage of Love*, p.211.

of your losing your self-respect – has put it out of my power to see you – a long privation both to Mary and myself. Not to say that my health would immediately give way under the misery which it wd occasion me. This may also be said of your widowed sister. There is, so far as I know, but one course open to you – to turn water-drinker, with Fell’s advice – et dedoluisse semel [Give over grieving once and for all].<sup>220</sup>

Derwent identifies Hartley’s drinking habit as the boundary which excludes him from his family’s society. That boundary exists on both sides; Hartley erects it, but Derwent asserts that it is impossible for him, Mary or Sara to breach it. The question mark grammatically ‘cuts’ Hartley off from Derwent and his family, whilst the dashes, a form of punctuation Derwent does not employ lightly, indicate his distress. The dashes also act to affirm a connection between Derwent’s concern and his inability to help.

Derwent’s final injunction – ‘dedoluisse semel’ – is more biting than its pleading tone implies. The Latin is quoted from Book 1 of Ovid’s *Fasti*. Ariadne, abandoned once more, rails against Bacchus for leaving her: ‘[q]uid me desertis perituram, Liber, arenis | Servabas? potui dedoluisse semel’.<sup>221</sup> Derwent’s intertextual reference connects Hartley explicitly with the god of wine, whilst simultaneously acknowledging Hartley’s grief over his multiple desertions. The role of Ariadne in Derwent’s meaning is more subtle. She speaks the line from which Derwent quotes, and so the implication is that Derwent is allied with her: he pleads for Hartley to return to a social space in which the family can be together just as Ariadne begs

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<sup>220</sup> Letter: Derwent to Hartley, 1845, quoted in *DCL*, pp.223-24.

<sup>221</sup> *The Fasti of Ovid*, III.407-408, ed. by G.H. Hallam (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1906), p.73.

Bacchus to return to her from India. Both Bacchus and Hartley reside, in part due to their alcoholic tendencies, in another world. But Hartley's position also recalls Ariadne's in her more famous plight, and the quotation links Hartley's drinking problem to Ariadne's imprisonment in the labyrinth. Hartley cannot find his way out of the 'subtle intricate labyrinth' of his body, the walls of which are formed from Hartley's addiction problems. Taylor imagines Hartley to reside imaginatively in the 'Cave of the Gnome', the dismal Esteesian alternative for drinkers to the heights of Bacchic inspiration.<sup>222</sup> In whichever imaginary architecture he is pictured, the message is clear: Hartley's imaginative boundaries were fixed through his perception of his own failure, one that seemed to manifest itself in his alcoholic excesses.

For Derwent, fear was capable of destroying identity. In the early 1820s, around the time of the religious crisis that inspired STC to write *Aids to Reflection*, Derwent wrote to John Moultrie, describing how he was unconvinced that escaping close confines was a means to positive freedom: '[a]s for my way of life, I sometimes fancy I resemble the Moriscoe in *The Remorse* as he was passing out of the cheerful sunshine into the dark and damp cavern whose termination was an empty and unfathomable pit, first a horrible dream and then destruction'.<sup>223</sup> Derwent imagines a freedom that is based on 'negativity'; its primary characteristic is darkness, which is incomprehensible. His inability to locate imaginative boundaries in the 'pit' renders him incapable of survival. The cessation of most of his poetic activity after 1825 perhaps testifies to his inability to navigate this imaginative abyss. After this time,

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<sup>222</sup> See Anya Taylor, *Bacchus in Romantic England: Writers and Drink, 1780-1830* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1999), pp.126-56.

<sup>223</sup> Letter: Derwent to John Moultrie, 30 October 1823, quoted in *DCL*, p.41.

Derwent mostly sought his 'emancipation' in a more conventional manner. He recognised that he was not a fanciful or visionary man, and after his marriage he wrote very little poetry (apart from light-hearted verses for his family's amusement). As I shall explore in the final section of this chapter, Derwent's creativity found expression in other ways, particularly in his architectural pursuits.

## **VI. 'Images for Shapes': Derwent's architectural imaginings**

For Derwent, architecture seems to have replaced poetry as a means through which he could express his creative potential. It was not until the 1880s that architecture began to be read as a manifestation of the artist's psyche,<sup>224</sup> and this misunderstanding about architecture's potential for phenomenological expression goes some way towards explaining Sara's disapproval; she wrote to Henry in 1834 to say that '[d]ear Derwent's anxiety about architecture is a pity'.<sup>225</sup> Nevertheless, Derwent's architectural drawings can be read in light of his imaginative relationship to his family. Indeed, his main architectural pursuits drew self-consciously on his family heritage.

Derwent felt himself to be as damaged by childhood experiences as his siblings. He reassured Hartley that he, too, felt unable to respond adequately to the traumas of his early years:

Think not that I have written with any assumption or feeling of superiority – I deeply sympathise with all your weakness. God has preserved me from some

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<sup>224</sup> Vidler, p.72.

<sup>225</sup> Quoted in *DCL*, p.132.

outward ill effects of the disease within – but I am (as I trust you are,) only struggling for more complete emancipation.<sup>226</sup>

Derwent affirms that he does not allow his phenomenological relationship to the world to impact upon his behaviour, and he suggests he manages this by maintaining careful boundaries between his inward thoughts and outward actions. He declares that his imaginative aims are identical to Hartley's; that is, to seek 'emancipation' from their psychological difficulties. Derwent's search for 'emancipation' was conversely expressed through his determination to construct secure physical limits. A Bloomian reading of Romantic poetics privileges the sublime and a poetics of the vast. Contraction, for Bloom, is akin to being 'frightened out of our creative potential'.<sup>227</sup> This focus disallows the kinds of 'potential' discoverable in domestic spaces. In fact, Derwent's architectural designs, which focused most often on his ideas of home (excepting his design of the Chapel at St. Mark's College, Chelsea), visualise the imaginative contraction that could simultaneously enact and protect his creative potential. If the house is a site of protective enclosure,<sup>228</sup> Derwent's architectural interests imply a need to imagine 'redoubts' which would offer practical seclusion from the unwanted troubles of life.<sup>229</sup> His architectural drawings explore his entrapment in creatively productive ways that express a similar type of poetics to his siblings.

The imaginative relationship between architecture and poetry is one which STC recognised. STC wrote in his notebook in 1803, at around the same time he was

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<sup>226</sup> Letter: Derwent to Hartley, 1845, quoted in *DCL*, p.224.

<sup>227</sup> Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence*, p.24.

<sup>228</sup> Bachelard, p.7.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46.



beginning seriously to develop his theories of space, that he needed to 'have [his] Imagination enriched with appropriate Images for Shapes – /Read Architecture, & Ichthyology' (CN, I.1616). He expanded on the imaginative possibilities of architecture in *The Friend*. Recalling the magnificent staircase in the home of his Ottery neighbour, Sir Stafford Northcote, STC remembered the

magnificent stair-case, relieved at well proportioned intervals by spacious landing-places, this adorned with grand or shewy plants, the next looking out on an extensive prospect through the stately window with its side panes of rich blues and saturated amber or orange tints: while from the last and highest the eye commanded the whole spiral ascent with the marbled pavement of the great hall from which it seemed to spring up as if it merely *used* the ground on which it rested.

'My readers', he continued, 'will find no difficulty in translating these forms of the outward senses into their intellectual analogies'.<sup>230</sup> Indeed, STC's poetics rely upon the ability of his readers to translate these external 'forms' into the appropriate creative metaphor. The selection of this particular staircase for STC's metaphorical purpose is not incidental. It operates on a different imaginative plain to the likes of Piranesi's iconic engravings, invoked by De Quincey to describe the workings of the opium addict's brain.<sup>231</sup> This staircase has a definite end-point: the platform from which the climber can survey the staircase in its unified entirety. It is much closer to

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<sup>230</sup> 'Essay IV', *The Friend*, I, pp.148-49, original emphasis.

<sup>231</sup> Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater and Other Writings*, ed. by Grevel Lindop (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.70.

the staircase the speaker must ascend in Keats's *Fall of Hyperion*;<sup>232</sup> for both poets, reaching the top of the staircase is akin to creative success.

Nevertheless, the choice of Sir Stafford Northcote's staircase suggests that STC's poetic inspiration remained grounded in domestic experiences. Even 'Kubla Khan', STC's visionary opus, describes the poetic effect of constructing a dwelling in the form of the 'stately pleasure dome' ('Kubla Khan', l.2, *STCPW*, l.1, p.513). The house is the inspiration for the poet's imaginative architecture, but the description of the staircase also indicates his attitude towards the domestic. In the case of Sir Stafford Northcote's house, STC draws inspiration from the 'marble hall' and the 'shewy plants', but his goal is ultimately a place imaginatively beyond these real-world objects. Like the staircase itself, the poet 'use[s]' things of the earth as a necessary platform from which to access visionary heights. This house may be utilised for its metaphoric potential, but ultimately STC imagines himself to be outside of it, and out of reach of its less poetic inhabitants.

Derwent seemed to his father to fit in more with the 'unpoetic' strain of the family represented by the Ottery Coleridges (with whom the Northcotes remained neighbours). He has consistently been ignored as being the 'ordinary' member of the family, in part because of his conservative ways of expressing his need for security.<sup>233</sup> In fact, this family's creative hierarchy upholds an unhelpful privileging of poetry over other art forms. Architecture's perceived lesser status, in terms of imaginative or

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<sup>232</sup> Keats, 'The Fall of Hyperion', ll.107-34, in *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. by Jack Stillinger (London: Heinemann, 1978), pp.480-81. All future references to this edition are included in the text.

<sup>233</sup> S.K. Ratcliffe, 'Review of Eleanor Towle: *A Poet's Children: Hartley and Sara Coleridge*', *The Daily News*, 9 April 1912. Quoted in Roger Robinson, 'STC's grandson compares Derwent Coleridge with Hartley and Sara', *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 2 (1993), pp.15-19; p.16.

psychological expression, might be attributed to Walter Pater, who wrote in *The Renaissance* that

[t]he arts may thus be ranged in a series, which corresponds to a series of developments in the human mind itself. Architecture, which begins in a practical need, can only express by vague hint or symbol, the spirit or mind of the artist. He closes his sadness over him, or wanders in the perplexed intricacies of things, or projects his purpose from him clean-cut and sincere, or bares himself to the sunlight.<sup>234</sup>

Although Pater denounces architecture for its lack of subjective specificity, he does recognise its expressive possibilities. Pater implicitly acknowledges the claustrophobic potential of architectural drawings. The artist 'closes his sadness over him'; it becomes, like the rooms and roof of the house, a form of 'envelopment'. In this way, as Carter puts it, sadness can be 'therapeutic' because it 'minister[s] to our incipient agora-claustrophobic panic'.<sup>235</sup> The architect might either delve into the 'perplexed intricacies' of the enclosed building or open himself up to the 'sunlight' of the external world, but in either case he finds in his art form a way of soothing his spatial anxieties. Pater's criticisms may hold true for those of Derwent's plans which did begin 'in practical need': the Master's house at Helston or the chapel at St. Mark's, for instance.<sup>236</sup> Yet Derwent's drawings were apparently not all intended for any realistic 'purpose', and this lack of empirical drive means that they may be read as expressions of imaginative, rather than purely practical, intent.

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<sup>234</sup> Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry: The 1893 Text*, ed. by Donald L. Hill (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA and London: University of California Press, 1980), p.167.

<sup>235</sup> Carter, p.181.

<sup>236</sup> *DCL*, p.132 and p.177.

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**REASONS**

**Figure 1: 'Cottage in Grasmere'. Reproduced with permission of Priscilla Cassam and the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.**

Derwent's imagination was Wordsworthian in its focus on local place. To STC's annoyance, and Sarah's relief, Derwent (nicknamed 'stumpy Canary' because of the yellow frock he wore as a toddler) seemed to take after the Ottery Coleridges in more than just his good looks; unlike his visionary brother and fairy-like sister, he was 'the abstract idea of a Baby' who was firmly a part of the everyday world.<sup>237</sup> He was the pride of the household's young maid, who used to take him with her on trips into Keswick with the result that Derwent, much more than Hartley and Sara, grew up as part of Keswick town life.<sup>238</sup> He developed a thick Cumbrian accent that caused STC to call him 'Lal Cumbria'. He was, as his godmother Dorothy Wordsworth commented, 'very much of the earth'.<sup>239</sup> Derwent felt a responsibility for representing things as they really were. Sara distinctly remembered Derwent colouring in a drawing of a post-chaise and, despite his frustration over the tediousness of colouring the individual spokes of the wheels, felt a 'resistless' sense of duty to finish the thing properly: it 'mutht be done', he lisped.<sup>240</sup>

Unlike Hartley, whose phenomenological intuition was from infancy a great source of pride for STC, Derwent struggled to comprehend the connection between his mind, his senses and the external world. STC recalled trying to teach the two-year-old about his sensory organs:

Derwent (July 6<sup>th</sup> / 1803) to whom I was explaining what his senses were for

[...]. I asked him what his Tongue was for & I told him /& to convince, held his

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<sup>237</sup> Letter: STC to John Thelwall, 23 January 1801, in *CL*, II, p.376.

<sup>238</sup> *DCL*, p.12; Lefebure, *Private Lives*, pp.178-79.

<sup>239</sup> Quoted in Catherine MacDonald, *Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years* (New York: The Viking Press, 1932), p.196.

<sup>240</sup> Quoted in Lefebure, *Private Lives*, pp.246-47. Lefebure notes that Derwent must have outgrown his lisp.

Tongue / he was not at all affected – having been used to have his voluntary power controlled by others. Sometime after I asked him again / he had forgotten – I bade him hold his Tongue and try to say, Papa – he did, & finding that he could not speak, he turned pale as death and in the reaction from fear flushed red, & gave me a blow in the face (CN, I.1400).

Susan Manly argues that this episode describes STC's attempts to remind Derwent of a pre-verbal infancy; she notes that the Latin root, *infans*, translates to 'unable to speak'. Derwent's inability to say 'Papa' is upsetting because it excludes him from verbal participation in the relationship; as Manly observes, 'Papa' is a word 'associated for [Derwent] with his deepest feelings of affection and belonging'.<sup>241</sup> Derwent's confusion arises from his inability to recognise his body simultaneously as an object and the source of his perceptions. By drawing the child's attention to his body as object, STC introduces Derwent to a sense of alienation from the self: Derwent's inability to speak whilst holding his own tongue emphasises a disconnection between his body and his mind. Furthermore, by prompting him to fail in the vocalisation of a word that sums up his sense of 'belonging', STC introduces Derwent to a feeling of alienation from his place within the family dwelling.

This sense of exclusion was consolidated later that week, when STC described Derwent's first experience of dizziness:

Sunday, July 10<sup>th</sup> [1803] – Derwent fever-hot. The Day before he ran round & round in the kitchen so long that for the first time in his consciousness he became giddy – he turned pale with fright, & repeatedly cried – “the kissen is

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<sup>241</sup> Susan Manly, *Language, Custom and Nation in the 1790s: Locke, Tooke, Wordsworth, Edgeworth* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.137.

walking away from Derwent” – pawing out his hands as if stopping it (CN, I.1401).

STC applies his own tendency to experiment on his body to Derwent. This episode, not unusual in itself, acquires more significance if we consider that it was in the weeks following it that STC began to articulate his theories of motion. Dizziness is a form of hyperbolic motion; it is indicative of an imbalance between the mind and the eye, during which the motion of external objects is out of sync with the subject’s own movements. Darwin used this sensation to confirm that perception must depend on active organs:

When any one turns round rapidly till he becomes dizzy, and falls upon the ground, the spectra of the ambient objects continue to present themselves in rotation, and he seems to behold the objects still in motion. Now if these spectra were impressions on a passive organ, they either must continue as they were received last, or not continue at all.<sup>242</sup>

Williams suggests that there may be a link between Darwin’s interpretation of dizziness and the boat-stealing episode in *The Prelude*.<sup>243</sup> Wordsworth describes how the mountain seems to move ‘with purpose of its own | And measured motion like a living thing’ (I.383-4, p.23). The crag seems to move at a pace disconnected from the poet’s perception; in this case, the object seems to be chasing him. The connection is even more explicit, although less sinister, if we apply Darwin’s description of dizziness to Wordsworth’s account of ice-skating. Wordsworth recalls the ‘spinning’ motion of the skater, and how when he stops ‘still the solitary cliffs | Wheeled by me’

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<sup>242</sup> Darwin, *Zoönomia*, p.23. Quoted in Williams, p.25.

<sup>243</sup> See Williams, pp.25-26.

(I.455-59, p.27). Derwent's dizziness has a similar effect; the kitchen appears to be moving 'away'. He seems to be being abandoned by the heart of the home. If the home is an extension of the self, this apparent dissolution of the home is akin to a fear of the dissolution or dilution of the self.<sup>244</sup>

Much later, Derwent's responses to the physical properties of the home came to express his stance as part of his family's Romantic network. The importance he placed on the house as imaginative structure is expressed through his architectural endeavours at Helston and St. Mark's College, and by his architectural drawings of an unidentified Cottage at Grasmere (Figure 1). These buildings become for Derwent 'the shelter of the imagination itself';<sup>245</sup> they allow him to express his bounded creativity in dialogue with his family's poetics whilst maintaining unquestionable creative autonomy.

Derwent was heavily involved with the design of new buildings at his school in Helston and at St. Mark's College. When poor workmanship meant that a part of the archway for Helston school cracked during construction, Henry reported to Sara that Derwent 'worries himself more than enough [...] about it'. Henry facetiously noted that Derwent 'might be content with less exquisiteness of execution, but he thinks his reputation as an architect is at stake'.<sup>246</sup> Although funds apparently ran out before it could be built, Derwent occupied himself in his limited leisure time by completing 'a formidable sheet of drawings' detailing a reconstruction of the Master's house. He designed a 'Gothic miniature mansion' with a 'grand library' that proved that literary

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<sup>244</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, pp.24-25.

<sup>245</sup> John R. Stilgoe, 'Foreward to the 1994 edition', in Bachelard, pp.vii-x; p.viii.

<sup>246</sup> Letter: Henry Nelson Coleridge to Sara, 7 September 1834, quoted in *DCL*, p.130.



pursuits were not far from his mind. The frontage of the house was to have panels framing the windows which displayed the Coleridge family motto: 'Time Deum – Cole Regum'. As Hainton and Hainton point out, the inclusion of the motto indicated Derwent's pride in his family name.<sup>247</sup> They attribute this pride to STC, but in fact the honour may have been for the Ottery Coleridges, who had been instrumental in securing for Derwent the position at Helston.<sup>248</sup>

Derwent's intellectual concerns are evident, too, from his design of a 'Cottage in Grasmere' (Figure 1). The cottage's location suggests Derwent's desire to engage in a dialogue with a Wordsworthian poetics of place. According to Polly Atkin's Heideggerian reading, Wordsworth's inscriptions 'claim' Grasmere as his 'dwelling-place',<sup>249</sup> a claim recognised by visitors from the early nineteenth century onwards.<sup>250</sup> For a man who spent his entire adult life in the south of England, Derwent's choosing to locate the cottage in Grasmere cannot be incidental. Just as in his design for the Helston Master's house, the study is central. In this building it is located on the second floor, bringing it into the domestic space at the heart of the house. The rest of the floor is made up of bedrooms, and Derwent's plan makes it clear that, for him, the study is a private, not a social, space (unlike Southey's study at Greta Hall, which doubled up as a drawing room).<sup>251</sup> The importance of the room is emphasised by the large bay window, which confirms the study's status as the most important of the

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid., pp.132-33.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., pp.82-84.

<sup>249</sup> Polly Atkin, 'Paradox Inn: Home and Passing Through at Grasmere', in *Romantic Localities: Europe Writes Place*, ed. by Christoph Bode and Jacqueline Labbe (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010), pp.81-98; p.84.

<sup>250</sup> See Saeko Yoshikawa, *William Wordsworth and the Invention of Tourism, 1820-1900* (Farnham and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2014), p.77.

<sup>251</sup> *ML*, p.42.

second floor rooms; it is the room that is privileged with the most light, and which enjoys the most expansive view.

The window offers a connection between the interior of the house and the outside world; as I demonstrated above, the large window in his study was the main reason for STC's fondness for Greta Hall, because it allowed him to gaze out at the scenery without leaving the security of his private space. For STC, the window acted as a kind of imaginative looking glass, transforming the mountains into a 'Camp' of giants' tents.<sup>252</sup> The study window served as a threshold between the real world and the imaginative one, a motif of which Derwent remained aware. On the way home from visiting Joshua Stanger in Huddersfield in 1877, Derwent was struck by the unusual formation of a window in Leeds Railway Station:

Fresh from the perusal my eye ~~light~~ is directed to one of the windows of the Leeds Station – Window! – Station! – Here said I to myself we have Light, and Rest – in the midst of movement, and progress. Surely we have here a cosmic symbol. Looking more closely I see that the composition is triple – a mystic triad, – 24 panes of three distinct forms – single, central, superior, one pane with a circular head, on a square base – the heaven and earth, as one. – the celestial arch surmounting the firm set earth – the monad of the universe, – and key to the whole system – Above 4 sectional panes – the tetrad, or [?tetragrammatic] – [?taken] with the monad, the pentad, or “hand of the universe” – Below 19 oblong square panes –  $9 + 9 + 1$  – the square of 3 – [crossed out word] duplicated and doubly significant, with the all-pervading

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<sup>252</sup> Letter: STC to Humphry Davy, 25 July 1800, in *CL*, I, p.611.

monad – while the entire sum 24 multiplied by the pentad (5) produce 100 – or twice 50, the pyramidal number!!<sup>253</sup>

This ‘mystic window’ is a point of ‘rest’ in the midst of a stressful journey; it becomes for him a ‘cosmic symbol’, a reminder of divinity at the heart of industrialisation. He describes it like a cathedral, with a ‘celestial arch’ that seems to unite heaven and earth. Derwent’s response to the train station is agoraphobic: he seeks a point of rest in the midst of excessive ‘movement’.<sup>254</sup> The trains by which he is surrounded seem to move of their own volition. The station thus becomes a dizzying, nightmarish vision of hyperbolic motion. Unlike in STC’s Spinozan theories, rest seems here to have become the essential life-giving force. It is in ‘rest’ that an element of the divine might be discerned.

Derwent writes that his eye is ‘fresh from the perusal’ of a pamphlet about the Great Pyramid at Giza. When he looks up, the window seems to stand in for the sublime experience Derwent attributes to the pyramid. Derwent refers to what Michael J. Barony has termed a ‘crisis in British Imperial metrology’.<sup>255</sup> In 1864, Parliament had sought to standardise British measurements by legalising the French metric system for use in contracts and commerce. In the ensuing debate, an influential group of ‘Pyramidologists’ sought to prove that the Imperial system was God-given because it could be found in the structure of the pyramid at Giza. Scotland’s Astronomer Royal, Charles Piazzi Smyth, travelled to the pyramid and undertook to

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<sup>253</sup> Letter: Derwent to Joshua Stanger, 13 August 1877, WLMS Moorsom/56/2/8, The Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

<sup>254</sup> This sensation fits with Paul Carter’s definition of agoraphobia as a ‘*movement inhibition*’. See Carter, p.9, original emphasis.

<sup>255</sup> Michael J. Barony, ‘Great Pyramid Metrology and the Material Politics of Basalt’, *Spontaneous Generations: A Journal for the History and Philosophy of Science*, 4.1 (2010), pp.45-60; p.45.

measure it (his results required some poetic license to fit his theory),<sup>256</sup> and John Taylor, most famous as Keats's publisher, published two influential volumes on the question.<sup>257</sup> As Francis O'Gorman asserts convincingly, the Pyramidologists were 'not a minor contribution to the Victorian debate'; he suggests that Ruskin's 'The Ethics of the Dust' (1866) owes something to their arguments.<sup>258</sup>

It is unlikely that Derwent, who prided himself on his intellectual currency, would have been unaware of this controversy. Derwent's letter seems to mock the Pyramidologists; his striving to outline the window's compositional basis in pyramid numbers satirically recalls Smyth's efforts to prove that the Great Pyramid was constructed using Imperial measurements. Derwent uses Cabbal numbers to discern a 'mystic triad' in the midst of the train station. The window becomes, in Derwent's reading, a symbol of Esteesian 'unity in *multeity*';<sup>259</sup> its identity depends upon the simultaneous recognition that it is composed of multiple small parts and that it operates as a unified whole. The window seems to offer an intellectual escape from the frenetic real world, but in fact its associations with the Pyramidologist debate mean that it fails as a threshold into another world. If the Pyramidologists' arguments consisted of a fusion of 'theology, colonial aspiration, national self-confidence, and precision mathematics',<sup>260</sup> then in fact what Derwent discovers in the window is a

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<sup>256</sup> See Charles Piazzi Smyth, *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid* (London: Alexander Strahan and Co., 1864) and his report on his expedition, *Life and Work at the Great Pyramid during the months of January, February, March and April, A.D. 1865; with a discussion of the facts ascertained*, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1867).

<sup>257</sup> John Taylor, *The Great Pyramid: Why Was It Built? & Who Built It?* (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1859) and *The Battle of the Standards* (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1864).

<sup>258</sup> Francis O'Gorman, "'To See the Finger of God in the Dimensions of the Pyramid": A New Context for Ruskin's "The Ethics of the Dust" (1866)', *The Modern Language Review*, 98.3 (2003), pp.563-73; p.567.

<sup>259</sup> 'Theory of Life', *STCSW*, I, p.510.

<sup>260</sup> O'Gorman, p.567.

reflection of the train station's motives. As his sardonic tone implies, Derwent recognises this window as a failed attempt to recall a Romantic imaginative space. This is not a Hegelian pyramid, in which an apparently closed symbol contains a hidden meaning.<sup>261</sup> This 'pyramid' is two-dimensional, capable of reflection only. That it fails as a point of 'rest' is evident: Derwent's eye remains in motion. He looks swiftly, as the dashes suggest, between the window and the train station, which is fraught, for him, with phobic anxieties.

In this chapter, I have argued that similar concerns about physical space impacted on STC's and his children's imaginations. STC's thinking about motion within confined spaces is central to his poetic thought, and similar concerns are discovered in Hartley's writing about his thoughts on the Lake District and Sara's accounts of her self-imposed entrapment in Ilchester. STC, Hartley and Sara employed similar agoraphobic approaches in their poetry. Derwent, on the other hand, used his architectural interests to reveal his thinking on the relationship between boundaries and creativity. Architecture allowed him to construct an alternative reality in which the ideal home was possible. His most detailed efforts – particularly in Helston and Grasmere – were visualisations of dwellings to which his creative faculty was integral. These buildings, along with the chapel at St. Mark's, provided a means through which Derwent could represent an imagination dependent upon the construction and negotiation of carefully drawn limits. In short, Derwent discovered his imaginative location in an alternative space that was closely linked to the real world.

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<sup>261</sup> See Vidler, pp.132-33.

Hartley and Sara similarly dreamed of poetic realms which provided opportunities to explore subversively their autonomous poetic potential. The focus on physical boundaries I have been revealing in this chapter is fundamental for understanding their constructions of imaginative limits. The next two chapters argue that coarctated boundaries are central to Hartley's and Sara's efforts to maintain autonomous senses of self. Their creative spaces demonstrate that an agoraphobic poetics was crucial for their abilities to interact with their precursors at the same time as establishing unique poetic identities that were located in specific imaginative spaces.

## Chapter 2: Hartley, Sara and the construction of Fairyland

In the autumn of 1827, STC wrote to Derwent to explain ‘the first principle of the Ess-tee-cean Philosophy’. He outlined his belief that ‘reality is a thing of Degrees’.<sup>1</sup> This school of thought had been emerging since the 1790s, when STC first began to consider seriously the relationship between himself as a viewing subject and the external world. If Wordsworth constructed a poetics of place that focused on physical location,<sup>2</sup> STC may be said to have constructed one of space; that is, STC’s imaginative landscape was constructed of perceptions, not objects.<sup>3</sup> Whilst Wordsworth imagined himself to be constructed by, and as a part of, the external world, STC performed a process of autonomous ‘self-creation’; he sought to channel the divine and natural elements of the ‘one Life’ inwards to achieve an active shaping of the self.<sup>4</sup> He aimed to write out of a ‘self-sufficient’ imaginative landscape. Yet, as John Beer implies, his poetry was more often about the impossibility of creating an independent internal world.<sup>5</sup>

STC’s descendants combined the two approaches: Wordsworth’s places remained important to their expressions of imaginative identity, but in order for those places to form a part of an autonomous poetics they had to be translated by the

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<sup>1</sup> Letter: STC to Derwent, October 1827, in *CL*, VI, p.705.

<sup>2</sup> Numerous critics have noted the importance of place to Wordsworth’s poetics and poetic legacy. For some particularly pertinent readings of Wordsworth’s creative relationship to place see: Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.94; Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Philip Shaw, ‘Topo-analysis and Subjectivity in *The Prelude*’, in *‘The Prelude’: Theory in Practice*, ed. by Nigel Wood (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), pp.62-97; David Cooper, ‘The Poetics of Place and Space’, pp.807-21.

<sup>3</sup> Gregory Leadbetter, *Coleridge and the Daemonic Imagination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.38.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.45-48.

<sup>5</sup> John Beer, *Coleridge the Visionary* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), p.14.

poet's personal experiences into a visionary space. The later Coleridges' imaginative spaces grew out of their physical infirmities; the legacy of ill-health I outlined in Chapter 1 is fundamental to an understanding of the family's adaptations of well-established poetic metaphors. In this chapter, I explore the ways in which these poets re-appropriated a clichéd imaginative space. The circumscribed boundaries of the new imaginative spaces they developed allowed them to maintain control over their creative interactions. Their constructions of Fairyland articulated through metaphor their agoraphobic perceptions of everyday spaces, and emphasised the ways in which they were highly interactive zones.

In his early poetry – particularly in the 1796 volume – STC mimicked the Spenserian tradition in calling his imaginative space Fairyland. Fairyland was a way for writers of articulating how the external world was 'fitted to the mind' (*Home at Grasmere*, l.821, p.105) whilst implying a relationship to a specifically English poetic tradition. Fairyland became a space of 'plurality' because it was constructed of multiple, individual imaginative spaces.<sup>6</sup> In it, they could come to 'self-definition as "author" in connection with other authors'.<sup>7</sup> STC's use of this metaphor was adopted by his children, but Hartley and Sara utilised it with caution. They revised their Fairylands so that they were unique spaces, connected to but distinct from STC's existing space. Nevertheless, Fairyland became an important expression of cohesion between the Coleridge family's poetics. It became a part of their poetic tradition because it clearly articulated 'the preservation of [this community's] values and

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<sup>6</sup> De Certeau, p.30.

<sup>7</sup> Wolfson, p.2.



beliefs',<sup>8</sup> particularly their strong sense of being a part of a visionary, specifically Esteesian, poetic tradition. These imagined landscapes provided the settings for the poets' 'internalized quest romance[s]',<sup>9</sup> the process by which they explored the interactions between their individual poetics and the wider family tradition.

As a textual space, Fairyland existed in a liminal position: it was located between reality and fantasy, the canon and its margins, reader and writer. The locations of its borders were therefore crucial, as I explore in more detail in the next chapter. The borders of each Fairyland were constructed from multiple aspects of the poets' reading, writing and imaginative experiences, and they carefully contained distinct imaginative spaces. These agoraphobic containments were fundamental in preserving each writer's expressions of poetic autonomy. Each poet read about numerous other Fairylands before writing their own, so that each new Fairyland suggested where the writer positioned him or herself within the English tradition. In Esteesian terms, Fairyland was a constantly evolving symbol, the palimpsestic properties of which meant that it could be continually reinterpreted by successive generations of readers, and subsequently reinvigorated by later writers.<sup>10</sup> Its continued re-use indicates how fruitful a term it continued to be for a variety of literary purposes.

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<sup>8</sup> Jack Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2006), p.11.

<sup>9</sup> To use Harold Bloom's phrase. See 'The Internalization of Quest-Romance', in *Romanticism and Consciousness*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), pp.3-24.

<sup>10</sup> For a helpful summary of STC's use of the 'symbol', see James C. McKusick, 'Symbol', in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, pp.217-30. Thomas M. Greene provides a tantalising account of the symbol as a symptom of incompleteness; see 'Coleridge and the Energy of Asking', *ELH*, 62.4 (1995), pp.907-31.

STC can be credited with re-invigorating the myth by introducing the type of Fairyland that would be repeated in numerous poets' works throughout the nineteenth century. Sara believed that Shelley, Keats and Tennyson were inheritors of an Esteesian visionary poetics, although she did not think that her father would have approved of their sensationalism.<sup>11</sup> She thought Keats in particular a poet of Fairyland, although she believed his imaginative spaces to lack the moral substance of her father's: his 'path is all flowers, and leads to nothing but flowers', she wrote, and she found reading *Endymion* like trying to negotiate 'a forest of giant jonquils'.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Keats's imaginative spaces were similar to the Coleridges' in an important way: they were reconstructions of phenomenological experiences of everyday spaces.<sup>13</sup> To look at the Fairylands of the later Coleridges is to look at the ways in which familiar spaces – and, as Chapter 3 will explore more fully, places – were re-written and re-inhabited in various ways which reflected these poets' autonomous imaginative positions. The Coleridge family self-consciously employed the term to invoke a complex literary heritage, and so the history of Fairyland as a

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<sup>11</sup> Sara believed that STC 'was in great measure the head and founder [...] of the Shelley-Keats-Tennyson school in the more sensuous part of his poetry; but [...] he combined more of the intellectual with this vein than his successors' (quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.199).

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.200.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Aske, for instance, writes that in Keats's poetry 'the landscape of antiquity emerges, as a purely imaginary space, from the poet's creative encounter with Chapman's Homer and other texts' (*Keats and Hellenism: An Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.35). More recently, Shahidha K. Bari has demonstrated how the spaces in *Endymion* might be productively read through a postcolonial lens as reflecting Keats's complicated thoughts on the increasingly cosmopolitan and heterogeneous city of London (*Keats and Philosophy: The Life of Sensations* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012), p.108). Roe also links Keats's spatial experiences to his poetic practice; for example, he suggests that the walled garden at Clarke's Academy in Enfield was revisited in Keats's idea of a poem as a 'little Region to wander in' (*John Keats*, p.19). These critics all consider, via very different approaches, the ways in which Keats's visionary poetry responds to the real world of his everyday experience.

poetic symbol is crucial to understanding the Coleridge family's constructions of unique imaginative spaces.

### I. A 'history only of departed things'

The Romantic Fairyland employed an old term for a new end. Fairyland linked the poetry of this era with a much older tradition. Fairyland was a poetic symbol that had been in fairly constant use since the medieval period; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Sir Orfeo*, for instance, both take place in a 'Faërie' parallel to Britain.<sup>14</sup> Angus Fletcher's assertion that Spenser's Fairyland existed in 'a referential vacuum' ignores the several hundred years of folk song and fairy tale that came before it.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, it was not until after Spenser that this term became representative, alongside Shakespeare's greenwood and Milton's Paradise, of a specifically English romantic mythology.<sup>16</sup> It became a representational space, one which was '[r]edolent with imaginary and symbolic elements' which had their source 'in the history of people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people'.<sup>17</sup> It was such a popular way of describing a certain kind of youthful, effusive poetry that by 1780 George Crabbe could write sardonically of a 'glowing chart of fairy-land estate, | Romantic scenes, and visions out of date'.<sup>18</sup> Fairyland underwent a poetic rejuvenation in the Romantic period; for Hartley, it was one of the revitalised symbols that marked the first half of the nineteenth century as an 'æra of restorations and

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<sup>14</sup> J.R.R. Tolkien (trans.), *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (London: Harper Collins, 1975; repr. 2006), pp.17-93 and pp.128-44.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence*, p.66.

<sup>16</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p.7.

<sup>17</sup> Lefebvre, p.41.

<sup>18</sup> George Crabbe, 'The Choice', ll.7-8, in *The Complete Poetical Works*, vol. I, ed. by Norma Dalrymple-Champneys and Arthur Pollard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.72.

revivals, political and poetical' ('On the Poetical Use of the Heathen Mythology', *E&M*, I, p.18). Nicola Bown has suggested that Fairyland acted as a scene of escapism,<sup>19</sup> but throughout the nineteenth century it was something more complex than that. The Romantic Fairyland mirrored the wider literary shift away from national movements and towards a poetic exploration of the individual.<sup>20</sup>

The Fairylands of the Esteesian tradition were indicative of the early nineteenth-century fascination with folklore and superstition, and the concurrent development of interest in psychology and the individual experience. As Jason Marc Harris explains:

[t]he interrogation of dreams, fairy tales, and superstitions that developed in the nineteenth century represented inquiry beyond empiricism; curious minds explored the mysteries of subjective experiences, just as they desired more from narrative than imitations of bourgeois or upper-class standards of reality. Fantasy and folklore presented new frontiers that provoked enthusiasm and objection from all sides: the stakes were political, religious, and personal.<sup>21</sup>

The evolution of the Romantic Fairyland paralleled the development of the fairy tale, and it was used for similarly wide-reaching purposes. As Jack Zipes's influential work on what he terms 'the evolution of the fairy tale' makes clear, the fairy tale grew out of oral traditions that expressed a sense of democratic nationalism.<sup>22</sup> The beginning

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<sup>19</sup> Nicola Bown, *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.11.

<sup>20</sup> Paul A. Cantor has suggested that the Romantic period marked the moment at which the individual replaced public or national acts as the heroic figure of the age. See 'The Politics of the Epic: Wordsworth, Byron, and the Romantic Redefinition of Heroism', *The Review of Politics*, 69.3 (2007), pp.375-401; p.376.

<sup>21</sup> Jason Marc Harris, *Folklore and the Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p.3.

<sup>22</sup> Zipes, *Evolution of the Fairy Tale*, p.82.

of the nineteenth century was a milestone in the evolution of the fairy tale: the rapid expansion of the reading public and the industrialisation of print meant that the oral traditions that had recorded and protected the fairy tale for generations seemed to be under threat. The likes of the Grimm brothers in Germany, and Thomas Keightley and Michael Denham in Britain, dedicated their careers to the preservation and publication of folk traditions.<sup>23</sup> The popularity of these folklorists' works indicated the level of cultural nostalgia that characterised Romantic Europe. The value of oldness had been brought into question by the rapid technological, social and cultural advances of the previous two centuries, and it remained a concern for the Romantics. Fairyland was one way of exploring the individual's relationship to the past.

David Newsome has observed that '[Romanticism] is both a looking back into earlier truths – mythology, legends, secret cults – and a looking beyond to the sagas of the north and the occultism of the East'.<sup>24</sup> Newsome's discovery of Platonic values in these revivals agrees with Hartley's assessment of his contemporaries. Hartley acknowledged that '[elder Platonism] turned the minds of men [...] from the things of time and sense, and excited a yearning after the eternal and invisible' ('On the Poetical Use of the Heathen Mythology', *E&M*, I, p.26). Fairyland became a popular way of imaginatively recalling a bygone era on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>25</sup> It evoked canonical literature, particularly Spenser and Shakespeare, and local myths and

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<sup>23</sup> Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1812); Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology* (London: William Harrison Ainsworth, 1828); Michael Denham, *The Denham Tracts: A Collection of Folklore by Michael Aislabie Denham and reprinted from the original tracts and pamphlets printed by Mr. Denham between 1846 and 1859*, ed. by Dr James Hardy (London: David Nutt, 1895).

<sup>24</sup> David Newsome, *Two Classes of Men: Platonism and English Romantic Thought* (London: John Murray, 1974), p.14.

<sup>25</sup> See Helmbrecht Breinig, 'The Destruction of Fairyland: Melville's "Piazza" in the Tradition of the American Imagination', *ELH*, 35.2 (1965), pp.254-83, p.255.

legends. It also acted as a pervasive metaphor for the poet's imaginative development: for poets from STC and Wordsworth to Letitia Elizabeth Landon, youth was, in Landon's phrase, 'life's fairy-land'.<sup>26</sup> It was a space which was both perpetually nostalgic and consistently progressive. Each writer who wrote Fairyland poems – and, as Bown notes, almost all the major Romantic writers wrote at least one<sup>27</sup> – engaged in a canonical poetic tradition that extended back into medieval poetry, yet simultaneously expressed changes to that space that enabled them to imaginatively claim it as their own.

In de Certeau's terms, Fairyland was a national poetic 'strategy' which successive writers and artists tactically altered to refresh the symbol and keep it engaged with contemporary personal, social and cultural issues.<sup>28</sup> Fairyland writers self-consciously engaged with this national poetics whilst altering it to suit their personal creative aims. No poet's Fairyland was a fixed entity; it was a fluid space which reflected the genesis of the poet's imagination. De Certeau finds in the fairy tale a particularly useful method for getting around the dominant cultural space. These tales frequently illustrate the same reversal of power as is found in Fairyland; that is, the utopian space 'protects the weapons of the weak against the reality of the established order'.<sup>29</sup> Fairyland is more than a simple side-step out of reality and into fantasy. It is, instead, a space which allows for the articulation of the relationships

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<sup>26</sup> Letitia Elizabeth Landon, 'To My Brother', l.24, in *The Zenana and Minor Poems of L.E.L.* (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1839), p.260.

<sup>27</sup> Bown, p.6.

<sup>28</sup> De Certeau provides a distinction between a 'strategy' – calculation and manipulation by an isolated recognised source of power that seeks to create a new place – and 'tactics', which are 'calculated action[s] determined by the absence of a proper locus' (pp.35-37). In short, a strategy is devised by a strong entity and tactics provide weaker beings with means of destabilising the larger power.

<sup>29</sup> De Certeau, p.23.

between reality and escape, and between 'weak', marginalised writers and their powerful canonical forebears. The Fairyland poet imagines tactical alterations to that space to create an autonomous creative landscape in which they 'can find *ways of using* the constraining order of the place or of the language' for their own poetic ends.<sup>30</sup>

For Wordsworth, the imaginative wealth discovered in his internal landscape depended upon its separation from the real world. It was valuable because it was unique:

Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most rich –

I had a world about me – 'twas my own;

I made it, for it only lived to me (*The Prelude*, III.143-45, p.77).

Wordsworth located a power in the act of phenomenological creation which isolated him from his fellow Cambridge undergraduates but revealed inspiration to feed his developing poetic mind. Conversely, STC's imaginative landscape was, like his descendants', interactive. Fairyland was one example of the 'symbolical language' he used to articulate the relationship between his 'inner Nature' and external 'objects of Nature' (*CN*, II.2546). Leadbetter explores this relationship in STC's works, and argues that the figure of the daemon is crucial to STC's poetics. For Leadbetter, the daemon is the embodiment of 'the simultaneous experience of exaltation and transgression'.<sup>31</sup> In Fairyland daemonic becoming – a conflicted process that is essential to the poet's imaginative identity – is staged in a transnatural landscape

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.30, original emphasis.

<sup>31</sup> Leadbetter, p.1.

which recalls and transforms the real world. Likewise, the daemonic inhabitants (specifically, in this instance, fairies) reflect the writers who imagine them.

Leadbetter recognises that STC's transnaturalism is an interactive mode; he highlights the ways in which STC willingly exposed himself to external influences.<sup>32</sup> Fairyland united what Leadbetter terms STC's 'organicism' and his journey towards becoming. In other words, the daemonic becomings witnessed in Fairyland suggest STC's 'provisional psychology': Fairyland is the kind of transnatural space Leadbetter finds throughout STC's work, one which housed an invisible power that was no less important than the visible objects in Wordsworth's writing.<sup>33</sup> Fairyland was not, then, simply a space for escapism;<sup>34</sup> it could be, as Wolfson suggests of Dorothy Wordsworth's 'Romance', 'a credible sociology' which articulated the poet's creative psychology and its relationship to that of other writers.<sup>35</sup> Fairyland formed a key tactic by which Hartley and Sara renegotiated their father's poetic definitions. Specifically, these poets agreed that Fairyland could be a space through which to explore the imagination in a sublime setting, but in a way that diverted all of these terms away from their Esteesian meanings.

## II. '[E]xpect nothing': the Fancy versus the Imagination

STC's early poetry self-consciously recalled the 'out of date', eighteenth-century Fairyland visions derided by Crabbe in 'The Choice'. STC described his imaginative space in 'Monody on the Death of Chatterton', the opening poem in his first published

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.; see in particular pp.35-68.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.53.

<sup>34</sup> Swann convincingly argues that romance performed a much more complex function than mere escapism. See 'Harassing the Muse', in *Romanticism and Feminism*, pp.81-92.

<sup>35</sup> Wolfson, p.202.



volume of poetry. STC's poetic landscape is revealed as a combination of topographical accuracy – it is based on the area around Bristol – and literary homage. It is 'the land of song-ennobled line' which inspired the 'Genius' of Shakespeare, Akenside, Otway and Chatterton (ll.23-25, *STCPW*, I.1, p.140). STC's first volume emphasises his interactions with these earlier Avon poets to make clear his position as part of an English fanciful mode. It is notable that STC recalled Akenside to defend this volume against John Thelwall, who disapproved of STC's double epithets and metaphysics.<sup>36</sup> Akenside imagined the fairy Fancy's home to be on 'the fruitful banks | Of Avon', and STC finds her there too;<sup>37</sup> she is, for him, an 'elfin form' who guards Chatterton's youthful poetics (l.54, *STCPW*, p.142). Indeed, for STC, Chatterton is himself fairy-like: David Fairer has noted how this version of the 'Monody' transforms Chatterton into a 'diminutive' and 'evanescent' figure.<sup>38</sup> STC's early Fairyland is thus populated by allegorical figures inherited from the likes of Akenside and by mythic versions of STC's literary predecessors.

Fancy is Fairy Queen in STC's first volume; she presides in the 'Monody' and again over the Devonshire countryside invoked in 'Song of the Pixies' (*STCPW*, I.1, pp.107-12). By 1797, however, STC found this kind of poetics juvenile. The 'Monody' was republished in 1797 against STC's wishes; like 'Song of the Pixies', which had been a central text in 1796, it remained only because of 'dear Cottle's solicitous importunity'. The problem with both poems, '[e]xcepting the last 18 lines of the

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<sup>36</sup> See Letter: STC to John Thelwall, 13 May 1796, in *CL*, I, p.215.

<sup>37</sup> Mark Akenside, 'The Pleasures of Imagination', ll.10-11, in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*, 2nd edn, ed. by David Fairer and Christine Gerrard (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), p.332.

<sup>38</sup> David Fairer, *Organising Poetry: The Coleridge Circle, 1790-1798* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.156.

Monody', was that they were too provincial: 'there are not 5 lines in either poem, which might not have been written by a man who had lived & died in the self-same St Giles's Cellar, in which he had been first suckled by a drab with milk & Gin'.<sup>39</sup> By 1797 he found the Monody's fanciful figures – 'as cherub-winged DEATH, Trees of HOPE, bare-bosom'd AFFECTION, & simpering PEACE' – deeply embarrassing. The 'Song of the Pixies' was more forgivable 'because the subject leads you to expect nothing'.<sup>40</sup> The Esteesian disjunction between fancy and imagination is already apparent: fancy was forgivable in youthful poetry, but anything lasting must come from the imagination.<sup>41</sup>

Fancy implied derivativeness: it was a passive mode which was founded upon association rather than original vision. For STC, it was a 'mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space' through which the poet could describe a phenomenological world that nevertheless remained defined by the 'fixities' of external objects.<sup>42</sup> The Imagination was the 'prime agent of all human perception', a form of motion that was defined by the movement of the 'finite mind' within the 'infinite I AM'.<sup>43</sup> It was able to 'dissolve' the things of the external world in order to 'recreate' an ideal internal landscape that constantly evolved to reflect the poet's psychology.<sup>44</sup> STC anticipates Merleau-Ponty, for whom the 'I am' is not able to be demarcated. Instead, it 'moves outwards' to provide personal, phenomenological definition to the physical, moral and historical worlds.<sup>45</sup> STC's imagination works in a

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<sup>39</sup> Letter: STC to Robert Southey, c.17 July 1797, in *CL*, I, p.333.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Vickers argues persuasively that the development of STC's definitions of the fancy and imagination were intrinsically linked to his experiments with regards to his health in the early 1800s (*Coleridge and the Doctors*, p.4).

<sup>42</sup> *BL*, I, p.305.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.304.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Merleau-Ponty, p.ix.

similarly interactive way: the poet viewed the world and imaginatively altered it to locate the relationship between the finite individual and the infinite 'one Life' ('The Eolian Harp', l.27, *STCPW*, I.1, p.233). Imagination was a mode which facilitated a self-discovery based upon what Helen Vendler terms 'lyric intimacy';<sup>46</sup> it depended for its origins on circumscribed boundaries, and it was the transgressing of those borders which revealed self-knowledge.

For later generations, the imagination and fancy were not so disparate. Instead, the poet's creative worlds were built upon the interactions between them. The fancy was an important part of the process of imaginatively recreating the world. Richard Woodhouse wrote to Keats in 1818, concerned that Keats felt that 'there was now nothing original to be written in poetry'. Woodhouse asserts that the 'true born Son of Genius [...] creates for himself the world in which his own fancy ranges'.<sup>47</sup> In Woodhouse's development of these unwittingly Esteesian definitions, the creation of the ideal world depends upon the correspondence between the imagination and fancy: the imagination internalises the things of the external world, and poetry is the result of the fancy's exploration of that internal landscape. This interaction allows the poet to move towards imaginative self-sufficiency. Addison recognised something similar when he wrote of Dryden's 'Fairy Ways of Writing' that they were 'more difficult than any other that depends on the Poet's fancy, because he has no pattern to follow in it, and must work altogether out of his own invention'.<sup>48</sup> For Woodhouse,

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<sup>46</sup> For Vendler, this intimacy is located in the poem's personal address to an 'invisible listener'. See *Invisible Listeners: Lyric Intimacy in Herbert, Whitman, and Ashbery* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), p.1.

<sup>47</sup> Letter, Richard Woodhouse to Keats, 21 October 1818, in *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. by Maurice Buxton Forman, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), p.225.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Bown, p.32. Beer recognises something similar when he writes that 'the projection of a complete universe demands from him nothing short of complete self-sufficiency of imagination' (p.18).

that 'invention' creates an autonomous set of boundaries: the fancy can only range within the confines of the poet's imaginary landscape. Of course, that landscape could be as vast, or as narrow, as the poet wished.

Sara's defence of the fancy was an important means by which she protected the reputation of her own publications. Sara's version of the fancy was an 'imagination of the heart', and it was the source of the poet's proper 'materials'.<sup>49</sup> In terms which recall STC's letters to Thelwall in 1796, Sara defended her fairy tale, *Phantasmion*, against Derwent's criticism. The siblings' views of *Phantasmion* are indicative of their conception of the relationship between poetry and reality more generally: Derwent, by 1837 a successful schoolmaster, was discomforted by the fairy tale's lack of didactic purpose, whilst Hartley and Sara were willing to enjoy it as a demonstration of Esteesian visionary poetics. Sara argued that there was no need for 'such a tissue of unrealities' to be overtly educational:

I should say that every work of fancy in its degree, and according to the merit of its execution, feeds and expands the mind; whenever the poetical beauty of things is vividly displayed, truth is exhibited, and thus the imagination of the youthful reader is stimulated to find truth for itself.<sup>50</sup>

Fancy, here, becomes a form of escape from containment; it provides an agoraphobic response to the world by 'expand[ing] the mind'. Sara, like Hartley, was a Keatsian poet despite her disapproval of some of his sentimental excesses, and she finds a relationship between beauty and truth that is also indicative of the interaction between fancy and imagination. She articulates the Victorian re-conception of fancy

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<sup>49</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.210.

<sup>50</sup> Letter: Sara to Derwent, 16 August 1837, in *Regions*, pp.9-10.

as something necessary for the imagination to escape the limits set by reason and aestheticism.<sup>51</sup> In other words, fancy depends upon a continued awareness of boundaries in order to bypass them. The 'beauty of things' embodies the fancy, and encourages the imagination to expand its search for worldly and psychological truth. Sara was part of the movement which altered public conceptions of fairy tales throughout the Victorian period, so that by 1874 Lord Coleridge could write in his 'Preface' to the re-issued edition of *Phantasmion* that 'the use of works of pure fancy is at least now generally admitted, and the good sense of cultivating the imagination is not disputed'.<sup>52</sup> Lord Coleridge followed Sara in recognising the intrinsic connection between fancy and imagination: fancy is still the lesser mode, but it is a crucial way of expanding the individual's imaginative boundaries.

The Romantic Fairyland was a 'minor magic' which typified fanciful creativity,<sup>53</sup> but for Sara and Hartley it also articulated a sublime poetics. They located a sublime vastness in their imaginative explorations of the small objects of their everyday worlds. Hartley and Sara translated the traditional sublime into quotidian experiences and thereby established an agoraphobic response that encapsulated the 'terror' that was integral to the sublime, even whilst they undermined it.

### **III. '[A]n immense heap of little things': the sublime in littleness**

For Bachelard, the ability to 'miniaturise' the world is directly proportional to the ability to 'possess' it. Miniaturisation does not mean that the world's 'values' become

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<sup>51</sup> Bown, p.33.

<sup>52</sup> John Duke Coleridge, 'Preface', in *Phantasmion, A Fairy Tale* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1874), p.v.

<sup>53</sup> Bown, p.2.

less important; on the contrary, they are 'enriched' in miniature.<sup>54</sup> He believes that the miniature allows representation to be dominated by the imagination. Miniaturisation makes explicit that the landscape described is a symbolic one. The miniature can then become 'one of the refuges of greatness';<sup>55</sup> it allows for the articulation of revisionary ideals without the risk of expressing them in the real world.<sup>56</sup> Miniaturisation becomes an ideal form for agoraphobic poetics, because it allows for consideration of 'greatness' whilst containing it within manageable forms. Beer acknowledges that the 'insecurity' that produces 'small' works is not necessarily a 'handicap'; in fact, he posits that 'the sudden release of pent-up energy may result in short works of great power'.<sup>57</sup> Fiona Stafford recognises the miniature as being one of the key concepts of Romantic literature. In poems like Burns's 'To a Mouse', Clare's 'The Swallow' and Wordsworth's 'To A Small Celandine', she locates a courageousness in the discovery of inspiration from the 'tiniest features of their immediate surroundings'.<sup>58</sup> As Stafford summarises, 'little things, if properly understood, were signs of greater'.<sup>59</sup>

This kind of miniaturisation was a key feature of fairy poetry throughout the eighteenth century: David Fairer and Christine Gerrard have noted that, in *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope 'perfected the technique of shrinking epic events and apparatus to

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<sup>54</sup> Bachelard, p.150.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p.155.

<sup>56</sup> Bloom defines his anxiety of influence theory as being 'revisionist' in a Freudian sense because works produced through that anxiety involve the alteration of a previous text in the pursuit of originality (*Anxiety of Influence*, p.8).

<sup>57</sup> Beer, p.18.

<sup>58</sup> Fiona Stafford, *Local Attachments: The Province of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.25.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.30.

miniatures'.<sup>60</sup> Stafford astutely notes, however, that the Romantics' focus on 'local detail' – areas or things with coarctated boundaries – ended the association of the small, or confined, with irrelevance and instead made them seem 'essential' to great art.<sup>61</sup> Fairyland highlighted the connection between the small and the creative; in Swann's words, although '[t]he pleasures of "romance" are often characterized as excessive and escapist', in fact 'the form is paradoxically bound up in a thematic of containment'.<sup>62</sup> In short, it is an agoraphobic mode in which the transgressing of boundaries into the wider world usually means danger. 'The Lady of Shalott' is indicative of the genre; the castle, although unsatisfying, is at least safe.<sup>63</sup> In Romantic poetry, the epic and the miniature are revealed to be similar forms because both represent the familiar world in unfamiliar detail.<sup>64</sup> Fairyland, a miniaturised representation of the real world, could articulate a revisionary poetics that subversively challenged dominant cultural narratives.

The young STC recognised an articulation of the unseen world of the imagination in fairy tales; he anticipated Hunt's recognition that the 'world of line and rule' co-existed with a phenomenological world which depended on the beholder's imagination. In the fourth of his autobiographical letters to Thomas Poole, STC described an early memory in which his father, John, had walked with him 'one winter evening' to take him stargazing. '[H]e told me the names of the stars,' STC recalled, 'and how Jupiter was a thousand times larger than our world – and that the

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<sup>60</sup> Fairer and Gerrard, 'The Rape of the Lock', *Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, p.114.

<sup>61</sup> Stafford, p.30.

<sup>62</sup> Swann, 'Harassing the Muse', p.87.

<sup>63</sup> Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott', in *Tennyson: A Selected Edition*, ed. by Christopher Ricks (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007), pp.18-27.

<sup>64</sup> Bown, p.66.

other twinkling stars were Suns that had worlds rolling round them – & when I came home, he shewed me how they rolled round'.<sup>65</sup> STC told Poole that he listened 'without the least mixture of wonder or incredulity'. He attributed his precocious ability to comprehend this complex notion of a vast interactive universe to his childhood reading:

from my early reading of Faery Tales, & Genii &c &c – my mind had been habituated *to the Vast* – & I never regarded *my senses* in any way as the criteria of my belief. I regarded all my creeds by my conceptions not by my *sight* – even at that age. Should children be permitted to read Romances, & Relations of Giants & Magicians, & Genii? – I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of "the Great," & "the Whole".<sup>66</sup>

STC's reading of 'Relations of Giants & Magicians, & Genii' imaginatively introduced him to a wide world beyond the provincial physical one of Ottery St. Mary in a way which anticipated his introduction to the rest of the universe. As Beer has noted, in this extract a 'delicate relationship between the human mind, the physical universe and the spiritual universe' is made apparent via the connecting sense of the Vast.<sup>67</sup> The expansion of STC's universe through his childhood reading meant that he (like Wordsworth, Southey and Lamb) advocated the didactic potential of fairy tales several decades before their capacity for moral instruction was recognised by society in general. They allowed him to escape the sometimes frightening spaces of the real

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<sup>65</sup> Letter: STC to Thomas Poole, 16 October 1797, in *CL*, I, p.354.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, original emphasis.

<sup>67</sup> Beer, p.32.



world, and to employ his imagination in constructing great things without having to leave the security of the domestic space. As I argued in Chapter 1, those coarctated boundaries of home remained vital for his poetic successes.

STC's early acknowledgment of 'the Vast' is attributable to a breaking down of the conventional boundaries by which the world is defined: that is, those between the senses and belief, the 'Great' and the personal, the real and imagined. For Bachelard, the word 'vast' is almost onomatopoeic; it is '*pronounced*, never only read, never only seen in the objects to which it is attached'.<sup>68</sup> Just as with the word 'pent' in 'Frost at Midnight' (see p.24), vastness becomes a feeling and the sound of the word is crucial in accessing it. The soft, long 'as' sound evokes calmness even as it implies the large dimensions of the described object. There is no Burkean terror in Bachelard's 'vast', because the linguistic prospect is clearly bounded: that long central sound is enclosed by the two short consonants, so that, in Esteesian terms, the sound of 'the Great' is limited by that of 'little things'.<sup>69</sup> Bachelard finds in the word 'vast' the linguistic embodiment of 'intimate immensity', a sublime feeling that is closer to Patricia Yaeger's 'sublime of nearness' than eighteenth-century aesthetic theorists' insistence on boundlessness.<sup>70</sup> The word encapsulates an agoraphobic poetics; it hints towards the expanses it simultaneously denies. The 'vast' acknowledges that large dimensions can be useful to explore metaphorically the regions of the poet's mind, but also recognises the importance of coarctated boundaries when internalising the experiences of the real world. John Coleridge's practical demonstration of planetary

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<sup>68</sup> Bachelard, p.196, original emphasis.

<sup>69</sup> Letter: STC to John Thelwall, 14 October 1797, in *CL*, I, p.349.

<sup>70</sup> Patricia Yaeger, 'Toward a Female Sublime', in *Gender and Theory: Dialogues in Feminist Criticism*, ed. by Linda Kaufman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp.191-212; p.195.

movements transforms 'the Vast' universe from a 'Great' entity into a 'little thing'. By re-locating the universe from the outside world to the home and providing his son with an alternative, domesticated visualisation of the cosmos, he demonstrated how even something so 'Great' could be re-conceptualised and made 'intimate' enough to be brought under the individual's control.

The 'Vast' reminded STC that there are many worlds contained within the same boundaries, and that recognition of these 'co-existent multitude[s]' depended upon the viewer's multi-faceted perception. The universe remained a source of fascination for STC because it reminded him that what seemed so 'Great' to him might be no more than a 'little thing' to a much larger being. An early notebook entry considers the possibility that

to some infinitely superior being the whole Universe may be one plain – the distance between planet and planet only the pores that exist in any grain of sand – and the distances between system & system no greater than the distance between one grain and the grain adjacent (*CN*, I.120).

The 'world of line and rule' is proved to be as dependent on subjective experience as that of the imagination. STC out-competes Blake in his litotic imaginings here. If the solar system is no larger than a grain of sand to some 'infinitely superior being', STC's implied question is apparent: what worlds are contained in microscopic proportions beyond human sight?

Microscopic vision opens up the possibility of accessing unseen worlds beyond the writer's natural sight. In Stewart's words, 'the world of things can open itself to reveal a secret life – indeed, to reveal a set of actions and hence a narrativity and

history outside the given field of perception'.<sup>71</sup> For Stewart, the 'daydream of the microscopic' is one of 'significance multiplied infinitely *within* significance'.<sup>72</sup> This daydream recognises a litotic sublime that is capable of the same 'vastness' as the more commonly-invoked hyperbolic sublime. Burke, too, realised that the 'last extreme of littleness' was 'in some measure sublime'.<sup>73</sup> Stewart's suggestion that the sublime found in littleness is the result of a mathematical equation recalls Burke, but for Burke this litotic sublime was the result of division, not multiplication:

when we attend to the infinite divisibility of matter, when we pursue animal life into these excessively small, and yet organised beings, that escape the nicest inquisition of the sense, when we push our discoveries yet downward, and consider those creatures so many degrees yet smaller, and the still diminishing scale of existence, in tracing which the imagination is lost as well as the sense, we become amazed and confounded at the wonders of minuteness; nor can we distinguish in its effect this extreme of littleness from the vast itself.<sup>74</sup>

Burke, almost precisely contemporaneously with Kant, finds an 'infinite divisibility in nature' that might also be applied to space and time.<sup>75</sup> The sublime in littleness depends on a loss of both imagination and sense: the mind, it seems, is capable of populating a 'vast' expanse, but, as Blake also realised, it fails when contemplating 'a

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<sup>71</sup> Stewart, p.54.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., original emphasis.

<sup>73</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. by Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.66.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Armstrong makes this point about Kant. See 'Theories of Space and the Nineteenth-Century Novel', p.3.

World in a Grain of Sand'.<sup>76</sup> It becomes 'amazed and confounded' when confronted with 'minuteness', unable to articulate the microscopic discoveries made on this small scale. This loss of imagination is what STC records in 'Dejection: An Ode': when the poet fails to recognise the world as a 'Great' thing, his imaginative capacity is undermined. Although he can 'see' the stars, he can no longer 'feel how beautiful they are' (ll.37-38, *STCPW*, II.1, p.699). This inability to internalise the natural world is disastrous for his phenomenological poetics.

This failure was not a new one. By 1797, STC was already beginning to realise that, for him, the world was a series of infinite divisions. In a letter to Thelwall that October, STC described the discrepancy between seeing the world and feeling it:

I can *at times* feel strongly the beauties, you describe, in themselves, & for themselves – but more frequently, *all things* appear little – all the knowledge, that can be acquired, child's play – the universe itself – what but an immense heap of *little* things?—I can contemplate nothing but parts, & parts are all *little*—!—My mind feels as if it ached to behold & know something *great* – something *one & indivisible* – and it is only in the faith of this that rocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns give me the sense of sublimity or majesty!—But in this faith *all things* counterfeit infinity!—<sup>77</sup>

This imaginative ache is dejection. '[R]ocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns' are merely 'little things' which build up the world; they are not 'vast' or 'sublime' in themselves. Conventionally large spaces seem confined to STC, and this

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<sup>76</sup> William Blake, 'Auguries of Innocence', l.1, *William Blake: The Complete Poems*, ed. by Alicia Ostriker (London: Penguin, 1977; repr. 2004), p.506.

<sup>77</sup> Letter: STC to John Thelwall, 14 October 1797, in *CL*, I, p.349, original emphasis.

phenomenological anomaly has profound implications for understanding STC's agoraphobic poetics. As I indicated in the last chapter, STC's agoraphobia was not necessarily physical or medical: it was imaginative. '[A]ll things' might 'appear little', but they can also 'counterfeit infinity'; that is, their imaginative potential is dauntingly vast. STC, like Burke, Bachelard and Stewart, locates a series of 'intimate immensit[ies]' in the world, and 'vastness' is proved to be the product of the poet's mind rather than something built upon the physical properties of the external world. Sublimity becomes something interactive, dependent upon the relationship of 'little things' to a 'something' much greater.

Hartley's sublime was similarly founded upon a view of the world which privileged interaction over isolation. As Healey has observed, Hartley's was not a Wordsworthian sublime. Instead, Healey shows 'how Hartley's verse embodies a relational subjectivity which [...] partakes in a reinvention of the sublime'.<sup>78</sup> Hartley stressed the imaginative possibilities of individuality – a drop of water in the ocean, a single flower on the mountainside, the pin in a lady's hair – but this focus emphasised that he was always aware that identity was founded upon the individual's relationship to the world.<sup>79</sup> Like Keats, Hartley reduced his human faculty until he became a 'Romantic "eye"' rather than a 'Cartesian "I"'.<sup>80</sup> Hartley's sublime depended upon the discovery of 'the great in littleness', and the 'mossy nook' or 'one of those self-sufficing angles which are a dale in miniature' stimulated his imagination far more than an 'extensive landscape' ('Books of My Childhood', *E&M*, I, p.346). As I

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<sup>78</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.4.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>80</sup> Jonathon Shears, *The Romantic Legacy of 'Paradise Lost'* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.168.

argue in more detail in Chapter 3, Hartley's microscopic vision meant that his Lake District remained distinct from STC's and Wordsworth's. Healey is right to suggest that this apparent weakness was Hartley's strength: she suggests that Hartley is able to 'evade the Bloomian prediction of authorial inferiority with regard to STC and William Wordsworth', enabling him to achieve 'a victory borne out of apparent weakness that "is the true sublime"'.<sup>81</sup>

One symptom of this perceived weakness is the poet's relationship to Fairyland: either he is excluded from it, or trapped within. For Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, STC's great-great-niece, STC was the presiding fairy over Fairyland. She perhaps expressed best the family feeling that Fairyland was symbolic of unobtainable literary success: 'I have no fairy god-mother, but lay claim to a fairy great-great-uncle, which is perhaps the reason that I am condemned to wander restlessly around the Gates of Fairyland, although I have never yet passed them'.<sup>82</sup> Like Hartley, Mary cast herself as a Geraldine figure, unable to pass across the threshold of poetic success without STC's invitation.<sup>83</sup> Mary's *fin-de-siècle* poetry was Romantic in its fascination with the poet's perceived lack of success. Hartley, too, imagined himself to be 'wander[ing] restlessly' around the borders of Fairyland, but Hartley's problem was more like Alice's struggles in Wonderland: the problem was not getting in, but getting out.

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<sup>81</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.100.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Edith Sichel, 'Mary Coleridge', in *Gathered Leaves from the prose of Mary E. Coleridge, with a memoir by Edith Sichel* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1910), p.11.

<sup>83</sup> Kasey Bass Baker, "'Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!': Boundaries and Thresholds in Mary Coleridge's Poetry', *Victorian Poetry*, 48.2 (2010), pp.195-218.

#### IV. A 'magic picture': Paradise lost and Fairyland reclaimed

Hartley believed that the English canon was based on tenets defined by a small selection of 'our great dramatists, and dramatic poets'. He identified Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton as the cornerstones of a group which upheld 'our poetic Constitution'.<sup>84</sup> These writers could justifiably be recognised as the most important of English writers not because of their personal visions but because of their ability to utter 'the common voice of mankind' ('On Parties in Poetry', *E&M*, I, p.3). In Hartley's thought, like Keats's, the most important attribute of the canonical poet was the ability to disguise their sense of self.<sup>85</sup> Hartley maintained that the poet should stand for democracy, and should 'speak, in short, for the whole state of human nature, not for that particular plot of it which they themselves inherit' ('On Parties in Poetry', *E&M*, I, p.4). He anticipated Emerson in attributing that quality most strongly to Shakespeare. For Emerson, Shakespeare's 'mask was impenetrable'.<sup>86</sup> He implied that Shakespeare's rejection of idiosyncratic poetics simultaneously defended his autonomy and allowed his readers to interact with his work. Shakespeare represented the ideal poet at the heart of a tradition of democratic poetry which

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<sup>84</sup> Walter J. Ong notes the dual meaning of a poetical 'constitution' in J.S. Mill's poetic theory. He observes that 'constitution' acts as both political and psychological metaphor, so that the internal and external become implicitly linked in the poetic imagination. See *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp.244-50.

<sup>85</sup> Keats coined the term '*Negative Capability*' to describe this ability to be 'in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason' (Letter: Keats to George and Thomas Keats, 21 December 1817, in *The Letters of John Keats*, p.71, original emphasis).

<sup>86</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Shakespeare, or the Poet', in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Volume IV: Representative Men: Seven Lectures*, historical introduction and notes by Wallace E. Williams, text established and textual introduction and apparatus by Douglas Emory Wilson (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp.109-25; p.117.

aimed to engage with everyone whilst continuing to develop the everyman's creative autonomy.<sup>87</sup>

Hartley goes further in his 'Preface' to his *Poems* of 1833, stressing that poetry belongs to all, and that all can be poets. His Wordsworthian belief that all of human nature was a fit subject for poetry goes beyond Wordsworth in its dedication to stressing what Healey terms 'commonality'.<sup>88</sup> Hartley believed that the vagrants, shepherds and country folk who populated Wordsworth's poetry could express themselves with poetic originality by describing their perceptions of the world. 'Commonality' is not antithetical to originality: the individual's personal poetics are founded upon their phenomenological interactions with the objects and people who make up their world. Hartley believed that the ability to re-invent the world was universal as long as the phenomenological experience was personal. Hartley identified two sub-divisions of the kind of poetry which sought to transform the world for the individual: the Miltonic and the Spenserian.

As Hartley has it, Spenser and Milton offer different ways of re-imagining the world. He suggests that it is because their poetic purposes differ that their imaginary landscapes remain distinct:

Milton is the most ideal, Spenser the most visionary of poets. Neither of them was content with the world as he found it; but Spenser presents you with a

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<sup>87</sup> De Certeau suggests that the "everyman" is a common place, a philosophical *topos*' (p.2). Shakespeare was a central figure for the Romantics; see Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) and Joseph M. Ortiz (ed.), *Shakespeare and the Culture of Romanticism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>88</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.107.



magic picture to exclude it from your sight, Milton produces a pattern to mend it by ('On Parties in Poetry', *E&M*, I, p.4).

Spenser and Milton both offer a 'glorified likeness' of the world which transforms it from 'local detail'<sup>89</sup> into something celestial or other-worldly. According to Hartley, Milton's purpose is more altruistic than Spenser's. Milton's Biblical place revises the real world, whilst Spenser offers an escape from it.<sup>90</sup> Unlike Wordsworth, Hartley does not think that such escapism is futile;<sup>91</sup> rather, Spenserian 'magic picture[s]' offer imaginative retreats which are necessary for the preservation of poetic autonomy.

The quest for the Miltonic poetic space is one which seeks to repair a crime. Paradise texts imagined a space which was not autonomous and not democratic: it was created by God and sealed away from all but two of the human race. In other words, it was a site of influence, not interaction. Spenser's Fairyland provided the democratic alternative. If Paradise was a place from which the reader was always excluded, Spenser's Fairyland was one into which they were invited provided they

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<sup>89</sup> Stafford, p.30.

<sup>90</sup> For conflicting views on Milton and Romanticism, see Jonathon Shears, *The Romantic Legacy of 'Paradise Lost'* and Lucy Newlyn, *'Paradise Lost' and the Romantic Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). For more on the Romantics' readings of Spenser, see Greg Kucich, *Keats, Shelley, and Romantic Spenserianism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2010) and Elisa Beshero-Bondar, *Women, Epic, and Transition in British Romanticism* (Lanham, Maryland: University of Delaware Press and The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2011). An early, but engaging, appraisal of Spenser's influence on the Romantics is Herbert E. Cory's essay 'Spenser, Thomson, and Romanticism', *PMLA*, 26.1 (1911), pp.51-91.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Festa observes of *The Prelude* Book V that Wordsworth 'employs a thoroughly Miltonic rhetorical scheme to reduce the "golden age" representations of English pastoral life in Shakespeare and Spenser to delusive fictions. Just as Milton extensively catalogues, gorgeously describes, and ultimately disavows classical points of comparison through which he establishes representations in Eden, Heaven, and Hell, Wordsworth includes earlier depictions of the pastoral in order to make his art by exploiting the earlier poets' inexactitude or unreality as compared to his own experience' ('The State of Unfeigned Nature: Poetic Imagination from Shakespeare to Wordsworth', in *Shakespeare and the Culture of Romanticism*, ed. by Joseph M. Ortiz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp.77-98; p.93).

knew how to read the 'certain signes' that guided them into that imaginary space.<sup>92</sup> It was at once an 'antique image' based upon an inheritance of hundreds of years of fairy-tale traditions, and a 'new world' based on Spenser's phenomenological engagement with Elizabethan England.<sup>93</sup>

It is clear that, for Hartley, Fairyland was related to Paradise. Whereas Paradise was sought in the real world, however, Fairyland was a subjective space that could be accessed by anyone who could imagine it: 'every man, who has the means, may make a plot of earth his own. So it is with the world of the imagination' ('A Preface that May Serve for All Modern Works of Imagination', *E&M*, I, p.75). Sara agreed; the sublime experience that STC would only allow to the privileged few, his children believed could be accessed by all.<sup>94</sup> Like Wordsworth, Hartley and Sara rejected the idea that utopian spaces should be 'a history only of departed things' (*Home at Grasmere*, 1803, p.103). Instead, Fairyland was 'an ordinary possibility of every day',<sup>95</sup> or an everyman's sublime space which was accessible to all, but was always particular to the individual. Hartley's journey out of the Fairylands of his precursors allowed him to engage in what Leadbetter terms, in reference to STC's 'becoming', the 'dynamic pursuit of gnosis'.<sup>96</sup> For Leadbetter, STC finds in the Fall a narrative of transnatural becoming. Hartley, too, finds fruit in the Genesis myth. In the sonnet 'Eden', he observes of Adam and Eve that "'Tis from their day of sin we date their life' (l.14, *HCP*, II, p.317). In order to exist in the real world, Adam and Eve must

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<sup>92</sup> Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II.Proem.4, ed. by A.C. Hamilton, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007), p.158. All future references are to this edition and are included in the text.

<sup>93</sup> Jane Hedley, *Power in Verse: Metaphor and Metonymy in the Renaissance Lyric* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), p.18.

<sup>94</sup> Mudge, p.80.

<sup>95</sup> Abrams, p.27.

<sup>96</sup> Leadbetter, p.78.

first pass out of the coarctated boundaries of Paradise. The sonnet reveals Hartley's perception that Adam's and Eve's becoming depended upon their escape from the confines of Eden.

Unlike Paradise, Fairyland did not belong to a specific historical time, and because it belonged to no time it could be imagined as being part of all time.<sup>97</sup> It thus became a trans-historical imaginative space that challenged temporal notions of influence and instead reconfigured them within an interactive site. As Newlyn recognises, when it was assumed that the recognition the poet deserved would only be forthcoming from future generations

[t]emporality itself became displaced [...] by a kind of prophetic hindsight which slipped backward and forward across the writing-reading axis. Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton were brought forward in time, to where they could be properly understood by their Romantic readers, just as the true understanding of Romantic writers was deferred to an undefined future. But they were *held back* in the past, because only from that position could they anticipate their power to endure.<sup>98</sup>

This temporal slippage is evident in Hartley's essay: despite the fact that both Milton and Spenser belong firmly in the past, for Hartley both are present ('Milton *is*', 'Spenser *presents*'). This displacement is revealed, too, by Hartley's poem, 'Spenser'. It begins with an address to the 'bard of happy innocence', 'My SPENSER' ('Spenser', l.3, *BWM*, p.62). The omnitemporality enclosed by the 'writing-reading axis' is indicated by Hartley's possessive attitude towards Spenser; the pronoun is the only instance in

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<sup>97</sup> Bown, p.151.

<sup>98</sup> Newlyn, *Anxiety of Reception*, p.279, original emphasis.

the poem where the speaker refers to himself. Hartley is not addressing Spenser the poet-who-writes, but rather Spenser the poet-who-is-read and, specifically, the poet who is read by Hartley. Reading Spenser is a private act which brings the past poet into Hartley's present reading experience. Hartley describes Spenser's 'inventions' as the prelapsarian 'babes of paradise', born 'without the pain | Of mortal birth' (ll.6-7). Hartley as reader recognises the temporal slippage which Newlyn describes: for him, Spenser's creatures 'never were, and never will be not' (l.12). In other words, they were never real, but are ever-present to the reader who internalises and possesses Spenser.

Hartley exhorts his own readers to look for Spenser's creations '[i]n the eternal silence of the heart' (l.19), a plea which emphasises that temporal slippage and internalisation are both necessary to locate Spenser's work in the present. At the same time, the poem holds out the possibility that a prelapsarian self might be discoverable. This is an Esteesian act of reading, one which, in Stephen Bygrave's terms, is a description 'of phenomenal powers which cancel and contain the past yet which continually defer their meaning to a time when it can be institutionally embodied'.<sup>99</sup> Hartley imagines these 'phenomenal powers' to reside in that 'eternal silence', a timeless voicelessness that resists linguistic embodiment even whilst it is imaginatively embodied by the heart.

The final ten lines of 'Spenser' witness a shift, and the poem closes by transferring the role of poet from Spenser to a present writer. Spenser is now referred to as a past presence in the third person: 'There Spenser *found* them' (l.20).

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<sup>99</sup> Bygrave, pp.48-49.

The 'phenomenal powers' are also transferred from Spenser to his reader. The reader has become the writer, and he now generates his own world:<sup>100</sup>

Though slimy snakes disgorge their loathly rage,  
And monstrous phantoms wait on Archimage:  
These are but dreams, that come, and go, and peep  
Through the thin curtain of a morning sleep,  
And leave no pressure on the soul, that wakes  
And hails the glad creation that it makes (ll.25-30).

Spenser's 'magic art' – a variation of the 'magic picture' Hartley describes in his essay – can only be internalised by the reader when time is recalled as the barrier between the act of writing and that of reading. The 'thin curtain of morning sleep' creates a coarctated imaginative space that allows the poet's agoraphobic poetics to flourish. Only when this separation occurs can Spenser's 'fair inventions' be transformed into the reader's own vision. Whilst in the first twenty lines the present tense belonged to Spenser, in these final lines it is the dreamer who controls it. The present is the time of creation, and in this poem whoever's visions characterise the subjective present create the phenomenal world. The 'thin curtain' is not only a barrier between sleeping and waking, but also lies between dreams and reality, the 'dark abyss' of no time and the oxymoronic light implied by this 'morning sleep', and between Spenser and Hartley. Reading, then, is an act which displaces temporality, but the act of creation – dreaming or writing – occurs in the present. In other words, the moment of

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<sup>100</sup> Sally Bushell expands upon de Certeau's work on the slippage between the roles of readers and writers. See de Certeau, pp.167-70; Bushell, 'The mapping of meaning', pp.46-50.

writing is the stable point on the writing-reading axis. It is the moment when one possibility from a 'co-existent multitude' emerges as the strongest.

## V. The 'faery voyager'

By all accounts, and as the previous chapter suggested, Hartley was accustomed from a very early age to think of himself as a being composed of 'multiple selves'. STC wrote to Dorothy Wordsworth on 9 February 1801, when Hartley was 'four years, four months, and twenty days' old (*HCP*, I, p.xxxii), to describe his eldest son's sophisticated conception of an identity constructed from a 'co-existent multitude':

I had a very long conversation with Hartley about Life, Reality, Pictures, and Thinking, this evening. [...] [H]e pointed out without difficulty that there might be five Hartleys, Real Hartley, Shadow Hartley, Picture Hartley, Looking-glass Hartley, and Echo Hartley.<sup>101</sup>

These multifarious selves co-existed in different phenomenological spaces, but what or who was the 'Real Hartley' seemed to be consistently under threat. The poetry Hartley wrote as an adult reveals a struggle to emancipate himself from some of those 'multiple selves'; specifically, from the textual creations of his father and Wordsworth. Healey demonstrates that 'the roots of Hartley's long-term misrepresentations lie in poems written by both STC and William Wordsworth, who created an image of Hartley as an eternal and ethereal child'.<sup>102</sup> Hartley recognised that, in the popular imagination at least, he would always be a 'limber Elf' ('Christabel', l.656, *STCPW*, I.1, p.503).

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<sup>101</sup> Letter: STC to Dorothy Wordsworth, 9 February 1801, in *CL*, II, p.673.

<sup>102</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.3.

STC's elision of the boundary between his real son and his textual creations has been mimicked by critics, and it was not until Keanie's 2008 biography that this view of Hartley as an eternal child began to be challenged. Robin Schofield neatly summarises the conventional critical position when he writes that 'Hartley's voice will remain an echo of his father's in articulating incapacity and self-entrapment'.<sup>103</sup> Schofield, however, like Healey, recognises that what Hartley articulated he did not necessarily believe. The 'incapacity' Hartley implied in his poetry actually enabled Hartley's expression of a coherent self founded upon an interactive poetics. Hartley's poetry utilises the textual Hartleys constructed by STC and Wordsworth but indicates how the adult poet is independent of these earlier constructions.

For STC, Hartley was 'a fairy elf – all life, all motion – indefatigable joy – a spirit of Joy dancing on an Aspen Leaf'.<sup>104</sup> The child seems otherworldly, but, as Lefebure comments, 'the evidence is that the father was to some extent deluding himself over Hartley's alleged morn to night joyousness'.<sup>105</sup> She suggests that Hartley's retreat into a private world was, in part, due to his father's 'irritable tongue-lashing'.<sup>106</sup> Hartley and STC shared an interactive relationship, which STC's description of Hartley tacitly draws upon: motion carries a twofold implication here, so that Hartley is both physically active and a being who helps STC's striving towards phenomenological definition. Hartley's 'motion' contributes to his supernaturalism, but it is a precarious existence. The Aspen Leaf, a popular motif from late sixteenth-century poetry and drama, implies a danger to this 'fairy elf'. Patrick Cheney attributes the introduction

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<sup>103</sup> Robin Schofield, "Amaranths" and "Poppies", p.71.

<sup>104</sup> Letter: STC to John Thelwall, 23 January 1801, in *CL*, II, p.376.

<sup>105</sup> Lefebure, *Bondage of Love*, p.136.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.136.

of the 'Aspen Leaf' simile to Golding's 1567 translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It was subsequently used in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. Both playwrights probably borrowed the simile from the climactic stanza of the first canto in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*,<sup>107</sup> when the Red Crosse Knight seizes his enemy's dagger and threatens to stab himself in despair: 'his hand did quake, | And tremble like a leafe of Aspin greene' (*Faerie Queene*, I.ix.51, p.123). The 'motion' of the leaf indicates the knight's fear: it is a symbol of the potentially fine line between life and death. His trembling hand embodies the sense of 'presence and absence rapidly alternating' that was STC's idea of 'motion'.

Hartley, too, acts as a physical portrayal of 'motion'; he is a 'spirit' who seems to alternate between the natural and the supernatural. In the Conclusion to Part II of 'Christabel', Hartley's 'motion' between the real world and a fantasy realm is made more explicit. He becomes

A little Child, a limber Elf

Singing, dancing to itself;

A faery Thing with red round Cheeks,

That always *finds* and never *seeks* (ll.656-9, *STCPW*, I.1, p.503, original

emphasis).<sup>108</sup>

In this 'poeticized picture',<sup>109</sup> Hartley seems to be both the 'little child' of STC's real paternal affection and the 'limber Elf' of his imagination; for Keanie, this portrait is of

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<sup>107</sup> Patrick Cheney, *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp.125-26.

<sup>108</sup> STC described this passage as '[a] very metaphysical account of fathers calling their children rogues, rascals, and little varlets, et cetera'; see Letter: STC to Robert Southey, 6 May 1801, in *CL*, II, p.729.

<sup>109</sup> Earl Leslie Griggs, 'Coleridge and His Son', *Studies in Philology*, 27.4 (1930), pp.635-47; pp.636-37.



‘the effortless poet that STC felt he had been, once’.<sup>110</sup> Hartley’s imagination already seems self-contained: the child sings and dances ‘to itself’. This ‘limber Elf’, however, is a derivative creature: it ‘always *finds* and never *seeks*’. In other words, the child does not create for himself. He adopts ideas rather than ‘seeking’ his own.

Even when Hartley was much older, it was the ‘limber Elf’ that STC recalled most vividly. In 1820, when Hartley was expelled from his position at Oriel College, Oxford, STC wrote a letter pleading with the Dean to change his mind. A draft of that letter indicates that Hartley had never been fully in the real world for his father:

Never can I read De la Motte Fouqué’s beautiful Faery Tale [...] of Undina, the Water-Fay, before she had a Soul, beloved by all whether they would or no, & as indifferent to all, herself included, as a blossom whirling in a May-gale, without having Hartley recalled to me, as he appeared from infancy to his boyhood.<sup>111</sup>

STC’s reading of Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué’s adaptation of the ‘Undine’ myth (1811) is another act which serves to displace temporality. The ‘beautiful Faery Tale’ imaginatively transports STC back to a time when Hartley was still a ‘limber Elf’, and he describes the experience in terms not dissimilar to those he had used nearly twenty years before. Taylor suggests that the comparison of Hartley to ‘the Water-Fay’ depicts Hartley as being ‘empty within, hollow, and susceptible to invasion of subhuman or supernatural images’.<sup>112</sup> Yet, the older Hartley recognised this derivativeness as a sign of the times: in an ‘age of books’, it seemed to require ‘as

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<sup>110</sup> Keanie, p.26.

<sup>111</sup> Copy of Letter: STC to Dr Coppleston, c.11 October 1820, in *CL*, V, p.111.

<sup>112</sup> Taylor, *Bacchus in Romantic England*, p.149.

much genius to appropriate an idea as to conceive one' ('A Preface that May Serve for All Modern Works of Imagination', *E&M*, I, p.72). Hartley's poetry set out to demonstrate how a poet who 'always *finds* but never *seeks*' could still be seen to be an independent creative being.

In his adult poetry, Hartley described himself repeatedly as an 'elf'. In age, he is no longer limber, but a 'poor elf' who is apparently a mere shadow of his father:

Because I bear my Father's name

I am not quite despised,

My little legacy of fame

I've not yet realized.

And yet if you should praise myself

I'll tell you, I had rather

You'd give your love to me, poor elf,

Your praise to my great father.<sup>113</sup>

The word 'bear' is double-edged here; it signifies that Hartley shares STC's surname and that it is a burden. It indicates a concealed sharpness to the poem that challenges Hartley's apparent narrative of failure. Andrew Keanie's suggestion that Hartley was simply '[l]imited by the number of words that happen to rhyme with "self"' perpetuates the myth of Hartley genuinely casting himself as 'a mischievous and whimsical little creature of little consequence'.<sup>114</sup> Taylor gives Hartley more credit; she recognises the connection with 'Christabel' and suggests that the two words act

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<sup>113</sup> 'Lines —', ll.5-12, *HNP*, p.93. Future references to this edition will be in the text.

<sup>114</sup> Keanie, p.1.

'almost as a mantra as [Hartley] pursues his father's words in his own disgusted introspection'.<sup>115</sup> The rhyming of 'myself' with 'poor elf' emphasises the connection between the present 'I' and that 'faery Thing with red round Cheeks'. Furthermore, it recalls Walter Scott's 'Marmion' and Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale', both of which employ the 'self'/'elf' rhyme to emphasise a disjunction between the real world and the imagined one.<sup>116</sup>

Hartley's apparent acquiescence to the textual version of himself created by STC is a poetic strategy that allowed him to explore dramatically the relationship between the 'real' Hartley and the fairy textual being. Hartley emphasised the distance between these two versions of himself when he wrote in a note in the 1833 volume of his *Poems* that 'I, does not always mean myself'.<sup>117</sup> Hartley is only 'answerable' to this poetic 'I' dramatically, but he is clear that his 'real' self is something distinct from his poetry and, by extension, from his father's. As Healey observes, the four key poems Hartley addressed to STC suggest that 'Hartley's conflict was more with his public image than directly with STC'.<sup>118</sup> Hartley's complicity in constructing himself as a 'poor elf' is a useful device through which to interrogate his sense of ownership over an autonomous imaginative and poetic identity within the Romantic canon generally and the Lake School specifically.

Hartley's relatives continued to identify him with otherworldly beings throughout his life; as Keanie and Taylor note, for the first-generation Romantics

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<sup>115</sup> Taylor, *Bacchus in Romantic England*, p.140.

<sup>116</sup> In the penultimate stanza of 'Marmion', Scott writes: 'I do not rhyme to that dull elf, | Who cannot image to himself' (VI.38.1-2, *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1935)). In Keats's poem, the rhyme connects the poet's 'sole self' to fancy, the 'deceiving elf' ('Ode to a Nightingale', ll.72-74, in *Poems of John Keats*, p.372).

<sup>117</sup> 1833, p.155n.

<sup>118</sup> Healey, "'A living spectre of my father dead'", p.96.

Hartley was the archetypal Rousseauistic child.<sup>119</sup> Wordsworth's 'To H.C. Six Years Old' followed STC's 'Frost at Midnight' and 'The Nightingale' in creating a myth of Hartley as an otherworldly being, one which Hartley (as well as Derwent) would later use to summarise his life:<sup>120</sup>

Thou faery voyager! that dost float  
In such clear water, that thy boat  
May rather seem  
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;  
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,  
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery.<sup>121</sup>

Hartley seems to be a changeling 'whose fancies from afar are brought' (l.1); indeed, like STC's 'twilight Elfins', Hartley is a 'voyager', a being who explores unknown imaginative realms and conducts poetic trades with them ('The Eolian Harp', l.21, *STCPW*, I.1, p.233). Once again, the 'faery' Hartley demonstrates clear interactions between the natural world and its supernatural counterpart; for Wordsworth, he seems to occupy a liminal point between the two realms. The stream suggests that Hartley is, as Healey argues, an omnitemporal being.<sup>122</sup> Its waters do not flow but are instead 'clear', suspending Hartley in a moment of stillness.

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<sup>119</sup> Keanie, p.61; Taylor, *Bacchus in Romantic England*, pp.132-34. Taylor also notes that STC was 'the first Romantic father' (p.131).

<sup>120</sup> Derwent quotes at length from all three of these poems in his 'Memoir', thereby implying that this myth should be applied to Hartley's adulthood, too. See *HCP*, I, p.xxii, p.xxiv, p.xxv. Derwent also quotes from a letter from Chauncey Hare Townsend, who writes that he felt how 'exactly Mr. Wordsworth must have delineated Hartley' in 'To H.C. Six Years Old' (p.lxxiv).

<sup>121</sup> 'To H.C. Six Years Old', ll.5-10, *PWW*, I, p.247. All future references to this edition will be made in the text.

<sup>122</sup> For Healey, it is Hartley's 'omnitemporality' which allows him to evade a Bloomian anxiety of influence. (*Poetics of Relationship*, p.100).

Having grown up being described as an ‘Elf’ by his father and a ‘faery voyager’ by Wordsworth, Hartley – or at least one part of his ‘co-existent multitude’ – already had a place in a Fairyland. The problem for Hartley was that the Fairyland in which he could claim a place was not his own: it was, variously, Wordsworth’s or STC’s. Hartley’s adult poetry departs from this inherited space and seeks instead to generate a Fairyland for himself in which the ‘battle’<sup>123</sup> between the textualised Hartley and the autonomous poetic ‘I’ is played out.

## VI. Hartley’s Fairyland

Hartley’s Fairyland begins in his act of reading STC’s and Wordsworth’s poems about himself, which he adapts in writing an imaginative space that is meta-Romantic.<sup>124</sup> Derwent found similarities between Hartley’s poetry and STC’s ‘earlier productions’; indeed, Derwent only found connections between Hartley’s poetry and STC’s early work (*HCP*, I, p.xx). Hartley’s Fairyland is a ‘mistranslation’ of those ‘soft floating witcheries of sound’ heard by STC at Clevedon almost half a century earlier.<sup>125</sup> This ‘mistranslation’ is deliberately dyadic; it emphasises the connections between previous Romantic imaginative spaces and Hartley’s Fairyland. In the untitled sonnet ‘How long I sail’d, and never took a thought’, first published in 1833, Hartley implies connections between his poem, ‘Effusion XXXV’, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and ‘To H.C. Six years Old’. This ‘faery voyager’ sails from ‘fairy-land’ on a ship laden with the

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p.66.

<sup>124</sup> Bygrave, p.33.

<sup>125</sup> Bloom’s word is useful here, since it indicates a deliberate act of misreading that leads to rewriting. See *Anxiety of Influence*, p.71.

poetic treasures ('rare and precious fancies' (l.5, *HCP*, I, p.8)) imagined by Wordsworth. This fairy Hartley does not enact the trade, however:

How long I sail'd, and never took a thought  
To what port I was bound! Secure as sleep,  
I dwelt upon the bosom of the deep  
And perilous sea (ll.1-4, *HNP*, p.8).

This is a sonnet from the speaker who complains that he was '[l]ong time a child, and still a child when years | Had painted manhood on my cheek' ('Long time a child, and still a child, when years', ll.1-2, *HNP*, p.9). Time is immaterial to him; the open expanse of the ocean is secure because it is isolated. Nevertheless, it is a vast space fraught with danger; its maternal 'bosom' also harbours peril. The speaker's apparent ease with the open sea is naïve. He is lulled into a false sense of security: the soothing rhyme of 'sleep' and 'deep' is disrupted by the enjambment which grammatically enacts the sea's perilousness. Unlike the Wordsworthian 'faery voyager' this mariner does move across the water, but ignores the 'changeful wind [and] tide' (l.7). He resists the mermaids' call to join them in their 'coral coves', and only wishes that he could maintain this isolated, joyful existence: 'And sweet it were for ever so to roam' (ll.12-14). This speaker finds inspiration in imagining interactions between himself and otherworldly beings, both those who dwell in 'realms beneath' the sea (l.10) and the mermaids who sing above it. He has escaped the Wordsworthian and Esteesian Fairylands, but still carries 'jewels' from them: 'To H.C. Six Years Old', 'Effusion XXXV' and the *Rime* all form part of the poetic cargo.

In 'How long I sail'd', like in 'Eden', Hartley articulates claustrophobia; he feels safe on the open water, just as he imagines that Adam and Eve's identity is based on their departure from the confines of Paradise. Once the poet acknowledges a sense of self-definition, however, he depends upon circumscribed boundaries to maintain it. Hartley's progression towards an autonomous Fairyland is indicated by the changes to the temporal states of the imaginative spaces through which the poetic version of himself passes. The Wordsworthian 'faery voyager' is static in an unmoving landscape that is unaffected by time. The mariner journeying on the 'perilous sea' away from that fairy-land notices the 'sun-beams dallying with the waves' on his 'long' voyage. The length of time is indeterminate, but it is clear that the speaker is aware of time passing. Hartley's final Fairyland, his independent visionary space, is a carefully contained vision. It is located in a very specific time and place: late at night beside the fire at Nab Cottage.

Hartley's poem 'Fairy Land' (first published posthumously in 1851) depicts the ageing poet's imaginative space. The dramatic 'I' here is the elder 'faery voyager', a writer-reader who analyses the long-term effects of the formative texts which shaped his early life. The ship is now a 'lonely ark', a motif which gestures towards Hartley's exclusion from the rest of his family: he did not see STC again after 1822, his mother or sister after 1829, and Derwent only saw him twice in the 1840s (and one of those visits was to attend his death-bed). Lefebure suggests that Hartley accepted this distance from his family, but maintains that he 'retained a childlike faith that in another, better world he would find himself back in the family fold'.<sup>126</sup> 'Fairy Land'

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<sup>126</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.19.

indicates that Hartley could imaginatively locate such a space: he might be in a 'lonely ark' on an 'everlasting sea', but that does not mean he has not preserved the 'poetics of relationship' which Healey proves are so crucial to Hartley's imagination.<sup>127</sup> Hartley now recognises a connection between the Wordsworthian and Esteesian textualised versions of himself and his real being:

For, though I never was a citizen,  
Enroll'd in Faith's municipality,  
And ne'er believed the phantom of the fen  
To be a tangible reality,  
Yet I have loved sweet things, that are not now,  
In frosty starlight or the cold moonbeam.  
I never thought they were (ll.6-12, *HCP*, II, p.162).

The 'faery voyager' is now nothing more than a 'phantom of the fen', a mythical Lake District being. Hartley continues to articulate a sense of exclusion, here from 'Faith's municipality'. That 'Faith' does not seem to be religious, but rather is poetic: it is a 'Faith' in Romanticism, the doctrines of which are founded upon a belief in the connection between the natural (the 'fen' and the 'frosty starlight or the cold moonbeam') and the supernatural (the 'phantom' and the 'sweet things'). The real Hartley 'never' believed in these Romantic constructions of his childhood. The semi-colon in the middle of the line ('I never thought they were; and therefore now') indicates the imaginative gap between the Fairyland of these precursor texts, where Hartley 'never was a citizen', and the Fairyland which he now claims for himself.

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<sup>127</sup> See Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*.



The key word in the first half of this poem is 'yet'. These recollections connect the poet's isolation with the textual interactions he recalls from his youth, making it clear that solitude does not necessarily signify a loss of connection. The cargo is the same as the 'jewels' he earlier imagined transporting from the Wordsworthian and Esteesian Fairylands, and here it is finally brought to rest in Hartley's Fairyland. This speaker is the adult Hartley negotiating his own Fairyland in the midst of STC's 'father's tale[s]' ('The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem', l.106, *STCPW*, l.1, p.520). Topographically, the landscape is identical to that in 'The Nightingale' and 'Frost at Midnight'. What has changed is Hartley's ability to articulate his phenomenological experiences. STC's poems imagine the baby's attempts to describe his perceptions, but his 'imitative lisp' ('The Nightingale', l.93) can only recall STC's thoughts.<sup>128</sup> Hartley's Fairyland is founded on the discovery of his imaginative autonomy: 'now | No doubt obscures the memory of my dream' (ll.12-13). Hartley's doubt arises from the uncertain status of the interactions between the 'faery voyager' and Hartley's real memories. Once he has rejected the reality of the textualised versions of himself, he is able to locate an autonomous internal space that is clearly demarcated against those imagined by Wordsworth and STC.

Nevertheless, Hartley's Fairyland is still constructed in conversation with STC and Wordsworth. The 'voice of eld' (l.18) Hartley hears beside the fire is a threefold figure: it is simultaneously the STC of 1798, a figure of elder times sitting by the fire with his firstborn on his knee; the contemporary, elderly Wordsworth (or, possibly, Mary Wordsworth); and the present, ageing Hartley. Healey has suggested that

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<sup>128</sup> Taylor goes further to suggest that '[t]he father silences his child's autonomous outbursts and decides what his impressions will mean' (*Bacchus in Romantic England*, p.132).

hearing was a crucial means by which Hartley was able to locate the sublime,<sup>129</sup> and significantly here, although Hartley has withdrawn his Fairyland from the outside landscape his father imagined for him, the ‘voice of eld’ still infiltrates his notion of it. A letter Sara wrote to Hartley on 30 March 1847, in which she described a meeting with the Wordsworths, perhaps contains a clue as to the composition date of this poem:

Mr W. is much more vigorous [than Mrs]: (her *voice* is so faint and low.) but perhaps more altered in *mind* – certainly very much more *altered*. He continually lapses into a kind of doze. Sometimes he brightens up a little; but at best he presents the faintest possible shadow of his former self. Indeed when he talks the best, it seems but the repetition and re-continuance of what was said before – as if he remembered what he used to think and say and by habit repeated it, than that any original process of thought went on within his mind now.<sup>130</sup>

The similarity in diction between Sara’s description of Mary Wordsworth’s voice as being ‘faint and low’ and Hartley’s metre-appropriate ‘tremulous and low’ ‘voice of eld’ suggests that ‘Fairy Land’ was written soon after Hartley received this letter. Sara’s letter perhaps acted as a catalyst for Hartley, transporting him back into memories of his childhood and the ‘voice[s] of eld’ which had accompanied it. Wordsworth (either William or Mary) is represented in Hartley’s poem via a synecdochical isolating of the voice: it is the ‘faintest possible shadow’ of a physical

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<sup>129</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, pp.45-49.

<sup>130</sup> Letter: Sara to Hartley, 30 March 1847, in *Regions*, p.87, original emphasis.

presence. The voice represents continued interaction within this otherwise solitary creative space: it implies that Hartley's conversations with past voices are ongoing.

Hartley's imaginative space is located by the 'low-burnt fire' where it began in 'Frost at Midnight' (l.14, *STCPW*, I.1, p.454):

it was always by the glimmering hearth,  
When the last fagot gave its reddest glow,  
And voice of eld wax'd tremulous and low,  
And the sole taper's intermittent light,  
Like a slow-tolling bell, declared good night (ll.16-20).

The fire embodies the miniaturisation that is essential for the creation of Fairyland: it is reduced to one 'last fagot'. Like STC, Hartley invokes folkloric language to make clear the daemonisation of this familiar world. According to Leadbetter, STC's 'fluttering stranger' 'invites encounter with the other'. The 'stranger' reminds Leadbetter of STC's interactive imagination.<sup>131</sup> It is intimately connected with confinement; it flutters against the bars of the grate, but simultaneously recalls the world outside. STC describes this scene as one of 'solitude', but he is not entirely alone: Hartley sleeps beside him, and STC's imagined conversation with the 'cradled infant' (ll.5-7, *STCPW*, I.1, p.453) is the one which Hartley replies to in 'Fairy Land'. By the end of 'Frost at Midnight', STC has imaginatively removed Hartley from his cradle and sent him into the outside world. STC 'undomesticates' this 'pre-verbal Hartley', turning him into 'an infant type of the characters of Coleridgean mythopoesis [who shares] their daemoniac mark'.<sup>132</sup> This is not an example of a one-way influence; STC

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<sup>131</sup> Leadbetter, pp.113-14.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p.122, original emphasis.

interacts with the baby, who in turn retrospectively enters the dialogue once he has found his voice in his own poetic space. In his Fairyland, the 'transnatural' qualities of Hartley's mind come to the fore, but now he is a daemon of his own making. Hartley's reply suggests that his 'mythopoeisis' is founded upon the same imagistic principles as his father's early poetic vision.

Hartley adapts a memory that is not his own in order to locate his Fairyland. Like Keats, Hartley finds in 'Frost at Midnight' the inspiration for what Roe calls a 'Coleridgean conversation between solitude and community'.<sup>133</sup> The fireside is a space of 'a past moment' of STC's solitude,<sup>134</sup> but by picking up this poetic conversation Hartley retrospectively transforms it into a communal zone. For Bachelard, the space that contains this kind of creative solitude is omnitemporal: the memory of that 'confined, simple, shut-in space' reminds the individual of a space 'that does not seek to become extended, but would like above all to be possessed'.<sup>135</sup> Hartley's poem recognises what STC's cannot: that the 'heartwarming space' of the domestic interior – both recalled from 'Frost at Midnight' and that which characterises the 'now' of this poem – does not need to be 'extended' into the outside world in order to be poetically fruitful. What Helen Regueiro finds in Wallace Stevens's 'Domination of Black' is true, also, for Hartley's 'Fairy Land'; that is, that '[t]he image of the room immediately establishes the enclosed space, the inner world, the intentional structure of the poetic imagination'.<sup>136</sup> Hartley welcomes the

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<sup>133</sup> Roe, *John Keats*, p.62.

<sup>134</sup> See Bachelard, p.10.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Helen Regueiro, *The Limits of Imagination: Wordsworth, Yeats, and Stevens* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), p.151.

coarctated boundaries of the house; within them, he is able to locate an imaginative space that interacts with STC's, and with the space imagined by STC for Hartley, whilst nevertheless defending his own autonomous poetic space.

The first half of 'Fairy Land' echoes in reverse the spatial experiences described in 'Frost at Midnight'; here, the poet moves from the outside world to the domestic interior. No longer in the 'frosty starlight or the cold moonbeam', Hartley has relocated his Fairyland back to the circumscribed scene at the beginning of STC's poem. Indeed, Lefebure suggests that Hartley's 'introspective moods' were 'frequently in the small hours by candlelight', 'when his head had cleared after a misguided session with the bottle'.<sup>137</sup> The domestic becomes a liminal place between the real earth and ideal heaven, a natural supernatural space that is the true location of Hartley's Fairyland. This liminality is contained within the light from the fire and candles; as I demonstrated in Chapter 1, the boundary created by the shadow beyond the flame is crucial in enclosing the poet's phenomenological experiences in the home. Beer recognised long ago that the domestic was a central element of Romanticism when he wrote that the poet's 'thought must [...] be part of a large and widely accepted universe of thinking in which he feels at home'.<sup>138</sup> Yet Lisa Gee discovers a unique aspect to Hartley's domesticity. She has suggested that 'Hartley gives us [...] an unadulterated appreciation and celebration of the domestic and the feminine, surprising – if not unique – in a nineteenth-century male writer'. In fact, Hartley's domesticated Fairyland is echoed by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hawthorne similarly finds in the imaginative transformation of the 'familiar room' a 'neutral

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<sup>137</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.127.

<sup>138</sup> Beer, p.17.

territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other'.<sup>139</sup> The domestic space is the ideal site for a natural supernatural interaction. Hawthorne recognises the 'somewhat dim coal-fire' as an 'essential influence' over the transformation of the familiar room into the domesticated sublime. The combination of the 'warmer light' with the 'cold spirituality of the moonbeams' humanises the imagination's fantastic constructions, and invites the beholder to interact with them as real beings.

For Hartley, too, the correspondence between the 'cold moonbeam' and the 'glimmering hearth' is crucial in creating his Fairyland but, unlike for Hawthorne and STC's early poetry, Hartley's poem rejects the moon as overseer of the fancy. Hartley's iambic pentameter forms a poetic connection with STC's 'Nightingale' and 'Frost at Midnight'; this is, in fact, the other half of a retrospective conversation. The 'last fagot' is a 'textual space', which, according to Bushell, is a 'readerly' concern; it is an object that is 'able to be re-inhabited in an open-ended way'.<sup>140</sup> The fire recalls two other 'co-existent' Hartleys: the character in STC's poetry and the reader of that verse. The flame is 'the sole unquiet thing': its 'glimmering' is the only movement in this static scene. The fire's motion connects Hartley's 'Fairy Land' to 'Frost at Midnight', as well as to STC's experiments with the candle-flame in 1803,<sup>141</sup> but the subversion of the earlier poem's movement here is a reminder that Hartley as poet can 're-inhabit' this scene and adapt it for his own poetic ends. The fire is the focus of this poet's thought:

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<sup>139</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, ed. by Brian Harding (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.35-36.

<sup>140</sup> Bushell, 'The mapping of meaning', p.48.

<sup>141</sup> See Jackson, 'Critical Conditions', p.131.

it reminds this poet that he, too, is an 'echo or mirror seeking of itself' ('Frost at Midnight', l.22, *STCPW*, I.1, p.455) in conversation with the texts and objects of the external world. (Lefebure notes that the cocked feathered hat and sword from STC's dragoon days was kept 'in a position of honour' over Hartley's fireplace.)<sup>142</sup> Hartley's search for selfhood is integrally bound with the fire; as for STC in his experiments, the flame is a crucial metaphor through which Hartley can express the importance of being contained within the domestic space. Here, the taper's 'intermittent light' acts in place of Keats's 'forlorn' in 'Ode to a Nightingale': it recalls the poet to his 'sole self' (l.71-72, *The Poems of John Keats*, p.372).<sup>143</sup> The spondee formed by the first two syllables of 'sole taper's' recalls Keats' similarly spondaic 'forlorn': the 'slow-tolling' of Hartley's phrase, too, transports him into another imaginative space. Here, unlike for Keats, that 'slow-tolling bell' does not call the poet back to a unified self which combines the imagination with reality to interact with the external world. Instead, Hartley's bell acts as a call for further interiorisation.

The 'sole taper' invites Hartley into a 'waking dream' in which he can 'think of Peri and of Fay' (l.21). Only once the 'slow-tolling bell' has confirmed his imaginative presence in this night-time Fairyland can these fairy tales come alive: in the deepening gloom it seems 'as if their deeds were things of yesterday' (l.22). This Fairyland reality replaces the real world as the poet slips into a recollection of the 'early reading of Faery Tales, & Genii &c &c' which had characterised both his childhood and STC's. In one of his notebooks, Hartley observed that 'my heart is

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<sup>142</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.130.

<sup>143</sup> Shears notes that in Keats's poem 'forlorn' is used, in a way that recalls Milton, 'powerfully to evoke loss and a sense of aesthetic "Fall"' (*Romantic Legacy*, p.170n).

calmer, happier, more pious whenever I think of these stories – they make me wish to be innocent again – to be worthy of being loved as I was when they were read to me by my godmother Wilsy’ (*HNP*, p.52). Fairy tales act as a counter to nature in providing an access point for Hartley into an omnitemporal imaginative dimension that is solely his own; it is not based upon Wordsworthian external objects, but an Esteesian subjective reading experience.<sup>144</sup> Like the fire in ‘Frost at Midnight’, this fireside is an antithetical symbol to Wordsworth’s lakes and mountains, and it transports him simultaneously back to his cradle and to Wilsy’s knee. It recalls, too, the scene imagined by the Grimm brothers as an ideal setting for the reading of their *German Popular Stories*:

Listening to the tale of mirth,  
Sons and daughters, mother, sire,  
Neighbours all drew round the fire;  
Lending open ear and faith  
To what some learned gossip saith!<sup>145</sup>

Hartley suspends his disbelief and re-imagines himself as a part of the Grimms’ Fairy tale world, sitting round the fire whilst the ‘voice of eld’ recounts Red Riding Hood and Hansel and Gretel. The ‘wee maid in her scarlet hood’ belongs alongside ‘the babes that wander’d in the wood’ (ll.23-24) and the ‘poor elf’ exploring a world that is a combination of real and make-believe.

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<sup>144</sup> Leadbetter recognises a rivalry between books and nature, or words and things, and suggests that since STC was excluded from nature he was ‘left with the books – the emblem against which Wordsworth defined his authority’ (p.74).

<sup>145</sup> ‘Epigraph’ to *German Popular Stories* (1824), epigraph to Bown, p.vii.



Hartley's selection of fairy tales here emphasises the danger of trusting too much to faith: the happy ending to Red Riding Hood did not develop until long after Hartley's childhood,<sup>146</sup> whilst the 'lovely twain' in this poem are not saved by their display of piety. The incursion of real-world suffering in these tales disrupts Hartley's 'Fairy Land'. Just as the gap between the precursors' Fairylands and Hartley's own was indicated by a grammatical break earlier in the poem ('I never thought they were; and therefore now'), now the disruption of Hartley's willing belief in these stories is reinforced by increasing grammatical disturbance. The 'lovely twain'

sunk upon their knees,

And said their little prayers, as prettily

As e'er they said them at their mother's knee,

And went to sleep. I deem'd them still asleep

Clasp'd in each other's arms, beneath a heap

Of fragrant leaves; - so little then knew I

Of bare-boned Famine's ghastly misery (ll.28-36).

The full-stop after 'sleep' does two things: it indicates the children's change of consciousness, and implies the beginning of a break in the poet's belief. This break is reinforced by the semi-colon two lines later. This mark, supplemented by the dash which emphasises a change in the poet's perception, interrupts the peaceful scene just as the poet's encroaching knowledge of 'Famine's ghastly misery' destroys his vision of contented poverty. The semi-colon marks the moment where Hartley turns away from Wordsworth's vision of the noble poor and towards a reformist poetics.

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<sup>146</sup> See Zipes (ed.), *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 2nd edn. (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

The poet does not stop believing in the characters until another voice interrupts the poem: 'But if 'twas said, "They'll wake at the last day!" | Then all the vision melted quite away' (ll.39-40). The voice affirms a theistic religiosity which destroys the poet's belief in the characters of the fairy tales. As soon as another voice overwhelms Hartley's within the poem, the 'fancy' parts from the 'faith' (l.42). Hartley's hostility towards religion here comments upon the connection which Wordsworth had established by 1831 between imagination and 'Scripture'. Wordsworth's later-life religiosity was received with wry amusement by STC and Hartley, who described the appearance of religion in the later poems as 'the popping in [...] of the old man with a beard'.<sup>147</sup> This is an unwelcome 'voice of eld', because it intrudes on the poem uninvited. Hartley's Fairyland is constructed out of interaction; as soon as overbearing influence is evident, Hartley's imaginative landscape falls apart.

The metre confirms this disruption. Unlike the rest of the poem, the final four lines are not composed in iambs. The change in metre affirms the poet's departure from this Fairyland:

And I thought the dear babes in the wood no more true  
Than Red Riding Hood, – ay, or the grim loup-garou,  
That the poor little maid for her granny mistook;  
I knew they were both only tales in a book (ll.43-46).

These final lines are anapaests, an unusual form for Hartley. This shift indicates Hartley's discomfort at acknowledging that these beloved characters were 'only tales in a book': the iambs set up a scene in which Hartley is at home, in conversation with

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<sup>147</sup> Leadbetter, pp.76-77.

his precursors. The anapaests suggest a break in that conversation; they emphasise the disconnection between text and belief. Hartley's 'Fairy Land' ends by mourning the loss of an irrecoverable innocence. Although the poet can convince himself in daydream that childhood is a permanent state,<sup>148</sup> the didactic voice that interrupts reminds him that interaction can be dangerous to a poet's autonomy if it threatens the poet's own imaginative beliefs.

Hartley's Fairyland was a scene of interactive solitude; it was built upon foundations suggested by previous texts, including STC's and Wordsworth's poems and his reading of Fairy tales. Yet, Hartley imagined himself to be alone in his Fairyland; as Keanie notes, it was a form of escape.<sup>149</sup> By contrast, Sara's Fairyland was a space of her own making in which others might partake. It was a space designed in conjunction with ideas expressed by her children and it grew out of her conversations about poetry with Aubrey de Vere. Nevertheless, like her brother, Sara's imaginative autonomy found expression in this unique poetic space.

## VII. The Sylph of Ulswater's 'airy dreams'

Like Hartley, Sara had always seemed otherworldly. She was described variously as a 'sweet-tempered, meek, blue-eyed Fairy',<sup>150</sup> a 'nymph', or

a delicate little sylph, so thoughtful, yet active in her notions, she would represent our ideas of Psyche or Ariel, Juliet would be too material, but she looks so delicate I should tremble at her becoming a wife or mother.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> See Bachelard, p.16.

<sup>149</sup> Keanie, p.43.

<sup>150</sup> Letter: STC to J.J. Morgan, 23 February 1812, in *CL*, III, p.375.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted in Mudge, p.28.

Sara's slight physical build, exaggerated by her lifelong poor health, encouraged these comparisons to otherworldly beings.<sup>152</sup> When she visited London at the age of nineteen she was nicknamed the 'Sylph of Ulswater'. This nickname was further corroborated by William Collins's portrait of Sara as Wordsworth's *The Highland Girl* (1818), which 'caused a sensation' when it was exhibited in London in 1819.<sup>153</sup> Furthermore, Sara appears in Wordsworth's *The Triad* as the last of the three 'bright Beings' (l.32, *PWW*, II, p.297). She seems the most unearthly: she 'reveal[s]' herself like a 'fair vision of the west' (l.179). Hartley irritated Sara greatly by continuing to refer to her as 'so perfectly a Fairy'.<sup>154</sup> Sara seemed suited to two locations: the house (as I explained in Chapter 1) or Fairyland. Her imaginary space combined the two; formed out of her agoraphobic impulses when she confined herself to her bedroom in 1836, the Fairyland she describes in *Phantasmion* provides a way for her to engage with the vast external world in a carefully controlled way.

As I argued in Chapter 1, Sara employed exaggerated forms of femininity to allow her the space and time to work. Mudge observes that notions of nineteenth-century femininity 'paradoxically celebrated an angelic womanhood so as to control its demonic netherside'.<sup>155</sup> He suggests that these 'etherial' representations of Sara suited standards of the day, as it 'displaced the body in favour of the spiritual and celebrated the "cultural stereotype", the "angel in the house" over its demonic

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.28. Beatrice Turner provides an excellent overview of these epithets and their effect upon Sara's textual existence; see "'A living spectre of my father dead': Childhood, Inheritance, and Memorialisation in Romantic-era British Literature' (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Newcastle University, 2014), p.90.

<sup>153</sup> Catherine Peters, *The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp.14-15.

<sup>154</sup> Letter: Hartley to Sarah Fricker Coleridge, 7 October 1833, in *HCL*, p.156.

<sup>155</sup> Mudge, p.11.

counterpart'.<sup>156</sup> The fairy was closely related to the angel in the house, but instead of domestic piety it invoked notions of mystic otherworldliness. It was a miniature figure that was seemingly unimportant. It did, however, provide Sara with a means through which she could express her own creativity without compromising her representation of herself as a feminine ideal.

Bown outlines a gendered poetics of fairy poetry, whereby men were fascinated with fairies whilst women were repelled by them, seeing in their small, delicate forms an insulting portrayal of the kind of exaggerated femininity they were expected to perform in their everyday lives, and from which feminism was struggling to liberate them.<sup>157</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft's novel *Maria*, for example, presents the fairy as 'a metaphor for the imagination, which is purely delusive; by indulging it, women exclude themselves from rationality, education, independence and political subjecthood'.<sup>158</sup> Stewart provides an apt summary of the problems inherent in representing someone as a fairy: fairies 'have the attraction of the animate doll, the cultural ideal unencumbered by the natural'.<sup>159</sup> By constructing Sara and Hartley as fairies, Wordsworth, STC and their social circle divested the children of their human subjectivity, transforming them instead into objects to be manipulated into place as part of a Romantic poetic system. The metaphor inherently implied derivativeness; this 'cultural ideal' did not allow for female individuality. Sara the 'lady fairy' was, like Asra, another of STC's 'Brocken spectre[s]'.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., pp.28-29 and p.88.

<sup>157</sup> Bown, pp.13-18.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p.36.

<sup>159</sup> Stewart, pp.111-12.

<sup>160</sup> As Lefebure refers to Asra. See *The Bondage of Love*, p.147.

Sara's body colluded with her evident visionary imagination to create an otherworldly image; even when she did prove capable of becoming a wife and mother, her friends commented on how absurd she looked holding a normal-sized baby.<sup>161</sup> Such reactions isolated Sara from the real world of physical femininity, drawing her instead into an imaginative or intellectual realm where she could reside only by accepting a semi-mythical state. However, like Hartley, these otherworldly descriptions had the potential to trap her in a Fairyland of other people's making. Like Hartley, too, Sara utilised the representation of herself as a fairy being and used it to assert her imaginative and poetic autonomy within a larger Romantic literary framework.

Because they were perceived as otherworldly beings, both Sara and Hartley found they could get away with erratic behaviour not normally allowed: Hartley was forgiven for his drunken ramblings around the Lake District, and Sara for her depressive and hysterical interludes. They seemed to prove themselves to be the imaginative, as well as biological, children of the visionary poet whom Lamb recognised as 'a stranger or visitor in this world'.<sup>162</sup> Sara's 'drama of becoming' was, in contrast to the progression Leadbetter outlines for STC, a movement from the daemonic to the human.<sup>163</sup> Like Hartley, Sara sought to reconcile her 'multiple selves' by providing them with an imaginary home in Fairyland.

*Phantasmion* is the only one of Sara's works in which she explicitly refers to a fairy land. John Lockhart wrote of *Phantasmion* that it was the last English fairy tale;

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<sup>161</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.303.

<sup>162</sup> Quoted in Mudge, p.31.

<sup>163</sup> See Leadbetter, *Coleridge and the Daemonic Imagination*.

however, by its re-release, after George MacDonald and Lewis Carroll had both found fame, in the 1870s it was heralded as the first Victorian fairy story. *Phantasmion's* influence over the writings of MacDonald in particular has long been noted.<sup>164</sup> Gary K. Wolfe has noted that its 'fully realized secondary world and political machinations [...] anticipates a number of key features of a particular type of fantasy novel'.<sup>165</sup> Nevertheless, when it was republished in 1874 *Phantasmion* seemed to critics to describe a world which would be interesting only to 'old-fashioned' children;<sup>166</sup> this was another 'out of date' vision, the likes of which Crabbe (whose work Sara particularly admired (*SCP*, p.232n)) had mocked in 1780.

One of the reasons for *Phantasmion's* commercial failure seemed to be its apparent lack of relevance to the real world. Nevertheless, Sara defended it against charges of obscurity that recalled criticism of her father's works. Soon after *Phantasmion's* release, Sara wrote to Derwent to outline her reasons for believing in the didactic potential of fairy tales. She forwarded to him comments on the genre from her friend Arabella Brooke, who maintained that

[“]it must be healthful to be withdrawn from the heavy substantialities of life!  
there is no fear they will be forgotten. – Do you not think the reason of the fear  
some people may have of Fairy tales is they do not distinguish between  
poetical and romantic imaginations, between representing this world as it is

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<sup>164</sup> The title of one of MacDonald's most famous works, *Phantastes* (1858), hints towards an imaginative debt to *Phantasmion*. See Laura C. Stevenson, 'Literary Ladders in the Golden Age of Children's Books', *Sewanee Review*, 119.3 (2011), pp.428-44; p.437.

<sup>165</sup> Gary K. Wolfe, 'Fantasy from Dryden to Dunsany', in *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, ed. by Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.7-20; p.14.

<sup>166</sup> An indicative review is that by Herbert Wilson in the *Examiner* of April 1874, who found *Phantasmion* boring (quoted in Low, p.139).

not, and drawing pretty pictures of another which there is no fear of children mistaking for realities?"<sup>167</sup>

Arabella directly associates health with withdrawal here; a form of elective agoraphobia seems necessary for the ability to cope with 'the heavy substantialities of life'. Like Sara's defence of fanciful poetry, Arabella relies here on an assertion that fairy tales are an important means through which to emphasise interactions between the imagination and the real world.

Although Sara did not feel that her complicated plot was in keeping with the 'Fairy tale ideal', she did suggest that, despite the fact there was 'a want of harmony between the several parts of the composition' and that it was 'not written to illustrate one moral in particular', it offered an important way of demonstrating to children 'the truths and realities both of the human mind and of nature'.<sup>168</sup> In *Phantasmion*, Sara's pantheistic Fairyland reveals a synergy between the natural world and the divine; it is a version of 'this world as it is not'. Although Mudge seems to agree with Sara that 'to print a Fairy Tale is the very way to be *not read*',<sup>169</sup> he nevertheless recognises the metaphorical potential of the plot: 'beneath its generic trapping, [*Phantasmion*] itself [was] a type of theology easily translatable into a more respected discourse' and it emphasised 'the dreariness and death inherent in the real world and the love and beauty attainable through the imaginative transformation of nature'.<sup>170</sup> Like Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, *Phantasmion* might be read as nothing more than a 'pretty picture', but to do so misses its allegorical, theological and moral potential.

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<sup>167</sup> Letter: Sara to Derwent, 16 August 1837, in *Regions*, p.10.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Quoted in Mudge, p.95.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.



For Low, *Phantasmion* is simultaneously nostalgic and progressive: he suggests it was ‘intended as a live, imaginative extension, rather than a nostalgia-driven imitation, of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s literary corpus’.<sup>171</sup> It is true that entry into Sara’s Fairyland depended upon an active correspondence between an Esteesian visionary poetics and the individual reader’s imagination, but the fact that *Phantasmion* articulated aspects of Sara’s original thought too should not be underestimated. This imaginative landscape was part of the same tradition as Hartley’s: that is, it was an individualised Coleridgean space which was modified from the real world to be brought under Sara’s poetic control. The main difference in their Fairylands is a question of audience: whilst Hartley’s Fairyland poems are addressed to readers of his precursors’ poetry, Sara’s tale is written for a future generation of readers. *Phantasmion* was written, initially, for her children – particularly Herbert – so that interactions between author and reader are a central concern. In particular, *Phantasmion* highlights Sara’s imaginative interactions with her family – both her father and her son – in a way that makes clear the extent to which her original thought was bound up with questions of both influence and reception.

Writing *Phantasmion* altered Sara’s notions of what her Fairyland should be. She confided to Aubrey de Vere that:

Before writing “Phantasmion,” I thought that for the account of Fairyland  
Nature I need invoke no other muse than Memory; my native vale, seen  
through a sunny mist of dreamery, would supply all the material I should  
want, and all the inspiration[.]<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Low, p.142.

<sup>172</sup> Letter: Sara to Aubrey de Vere, [1846], in *Regions*, p.17.

As the next chapter will explore in detail, this Fairyland was, topographically speaking, a re-imagined Lake District landscape. Nevertheless, Sara discovered that topographical accuracy was not enough to create a Fairyland: it needed to be coloured by an interactive imagination. Fairyland implied a miniaturisation of her native region that enabled her to simultaneously recall it and change it. She continued:

for the love part, and the descriptions of personal beauty, I invoked Venus to aid me. On my application, she told me that Fairy-land love was such a weak, sirupy stuff, and so little in demand, that it was hardly worth her while to keep any in store. She would send out Cupid as soon as she could catch him, to gather cowslips and primroses enough to make a few small bottles, that to ferment it she would use a little sea-foam which he might whisk off the surface of the waves after bathing, and that I should have it, fresh and fresh, as I wanted it in the progress of the story. In the mean time, though she could by no means lend me any of her swans or golden-breasted pigeons, she had a sick dove [...] which was at my service for any use I could put it to.<sup>173</sup>

This exchange is figured in terms of everyday domestic duty whereby Venus becomes a kind of shopkeeper, promising the delivery of the 'sirupy stuff' when it is 'fresh and fresh'. Sara's fanciful interaction with the goddess maintains a sense of feminine decorum; this is not, she implies, a scene of creative energy, but rather one performed as part of the woman-poet's quotidian role. She discovers it specifically within the confines of the home, agoraphobia's primary protective location.<sup>174</sup> As we will see in

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, p.5.

the next chapter, the topographical details of her Fairyland affirm that an agoraphobic poetics is essential to the space's identity. Any defects in the fairy tale are blamed on Venus's unwillingness to provide her with the right ingredients; this is 'Venus Coelestis', when what is really needed is a 'Venus fairy-landensis, abiding between earth and heaven, to assist writers of fairy tales'.<sup>175</sup> Like for Hartley, Sara's Fairyland is a liminal space. It is a mid-point between reality and divinity, a way of exploring the intersection between God and humanity, or between Paradise and earth.

The implication is that Sara is a derivative poet, finding her ideas firstly in her 'native vale' and secondly in potions given to her by Venus. Nevertheless, Sara's description puts interaction at the heart of her Fairyland; it is a space that depends upon conversation – imagined or otherwise – with multiple generations of one family. It quickly becomes clear that Venus and Cupid are alter-egos for Sara and Herbert. In the early stages of its composition, *Phantasmion* was written in Sara's family home; disruptions from her two small children were frequent. Cupid's fundamental role in providing the cowslip potion is echoed in Herbert's central position in the genesis of the fairy tale:

Since you desired to know particularly what I did and where I was when I wrote the book, and all the circumstances attending its composition, I must further inform you that Cupid behaved abominably about the cowslips [...]. I grew very cross, and reproached Venus for taking the matter so lightly. But she only laughed, and told me that I should have done just the same with my

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<sup>175</sup> Letter: Sara to Aubrey de Vere, [1846], in *Regions*, p.17.

urchin; just at that moment Herby came in, and began to be as naughty as Cupid, looking all the time equally pretty, so that I thought it as well not to push the dispute any further just then.<sup>176</sup>

Sara situates herself in two co-existent locations: the reality of the home with Herby, and an imagined pastoral space populated by her muses. *Phantasmion* advocates this kind of dual existence; Sara's readers, as she repeatedly suggested in her letters, should be simultaneously willing to imagine themselves in Fairyland and able to recognise its real-world applications.<sup>177</sup> Crucially, it is the children, here, who represent the outside world: Cupid plays 'about the cowslips' and Herby comes 'in' from an unspecified external location. Herby's passing over the boundary between outside and inside indicates his admittance into Sara's imaginary landscape. His movements emphasise that interactions between external and internal are crucial in Sara's Fairyland, but fundamentally for its successful creation Sara cannot go out: she must rely on her children to bring the outside in.

In a copy of *Phantasmion* given to Aubrey de Vere in about 1845 (*SCP*, p.235n), Sara sent her work away with an invitation for her reader to follow the text into this imaginary space. Like Herby, she invites them 'in' to an imaginative sanctuary. 'L'Envoy to *Phantasmion*' is addressed to the 'little book', and exhorts it to 'tempt the worldling into fairy land'. The poem suggests that 'airy dreams' will 'bring more wealth' than capitalist 'toil' (ll.2-4, *SCP*, p.177): a nod, perhaps, to the early notebook

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., pp.17-18.

<sup>177</sup> She wrote a 'Moral of "Phantasmion"' in her 'Red Book' that made this point explicit: '[a]ny Tale that represents human life, even in fairy-land, its joys and sorrows, troubles and trials, successes and failures, will have its moral, and the more truthful, if its aim is not [to] embody a particular moral, but to show things as they are, and let the moral follow of its own accord' (*Regions*, p.19).

entry in which STC suggests that ‘Commerce & its Effects’ would be a good subject for a fairy tale (CN, I.66).<sup>178</sup> These dreams are more than just a type of visionary indulgence; they are a ‘sacred duty’ which, as the adjective implies, will bring the ‘worldling’ into closer contact with the divine. Like Hartley, this was not an interaction reserved for the specialist few; she, too, believed in the democratisation of the imagination:

[i]magination, as we all know, is part of every human mind, or state which it is capable of passing into – an imaginative habit must proceed from that which is innate, but depends in some measure on the will of the individual. Poetic genius – and a powerful imagination – are rare gifts, but imaginativeness can hardly be called an uncommon quality, & more or less, imagination belongs to all.<sup>179</sup>

Sara raises a challenge to the assumption that the imagination is a purely natural gift. Whilst she recognises that imagination must have its foundation in an ‘innate’ quality, it is nevertheless a ‘habit’ which, by implication, can be learned provided the individual has the ‘will’ to do so. Sara agrees with Hartley that poetic ‘genius’ depends upon the individual’s ability to articulate their imagination, but this restriction only means that not everyone can be a writer. They can, however, be a good reader if they combine their natural imaginativeness with an ‘active’ reading practice: the ‘habit’ of internalising the text. For the right reader, *Phantasmion* will provide a deeper experience than a mere ‘airy dream’:

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<sup>178</sup> Coburn wonders if this is a projected work (CN, I.66n).

<sup>179</sup> ‘On Mr. Wordsworth’s Poem Entitled “Lines Left on a Yew-tree Seat”’, in Mudge, pp.217-30; pp.219-20.

But if thou meet some spirit high and tender  
On blessed works and noblest love intent:  
Tell *him* that airy dreams of Nature's splendour,  
With graver thoughts and hallowed musings blent,  
Prove no too earthly charm (ll.6-10, *SCP*, p.177, original emphasis).

Once again, Sara highlights that interactive relationships are essential to her Fairyland; here, the successful reader must understand that thoughts pertaining to the real world must be blended with those that aspire to supernatural landscapes. The removal of the emphasis in published versions of this poem makes the address more general (*SCP*, p.235n); the emphasis ('*him*') in the manuscript implies a singular addressee and suggests that the poem has a 'spirit' already in mind. That de Vere was one of Sara's successful readers is made clear by her description of him to Isabella Fenwick a year later, when she wrote that he 'lives so in a region of poetic thought – "an unsubstantiated faëry place" – outside the worky-day world'.<sup>180</sup> Once again, Sara distinguishes between the world of commercial 'toil' – the 'worky-day world' – and that of the imagination. Furthermore, de Vere is able to access her Fairyland because he also seems to enact a form of imaginative agoraphobia. De Vere is imagined in a confined space that recalls Sara's coarctated boundaries; he seems to live 'in' a 'faëry place' that is emphatically 'outside' the normal world.

Hartley's and Sara's works reveal a Wordsworthian tendency to discover the ways in which the 'external World is fitted to the Mind' (*Home at Grasmere*, l.821, p.105), but they do so through an Esteesian form of transnatural expression.

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<sup>180</sup> Letter: Sara to Isabella Fenwick, [1846], in *Regions*, p.162.

Fairyland was central to both poets' success; their reputations were founded upon their representation as fairy-like beings, and consolidated by their respective Fairyland publications. As I have shown in this chapter, they answered their precursors' textual constructions by creating Fairylands that maintained conversation with previous spaces, yet clearly articulated imaginative autonomy. Fairyland narratives provided them with the diction to discover in familiar landscapes the potential for individual expression. Nevertheless, the details of the 'external world' did remain important to their otherworlds. The transformation of factual geography into imaginative topography revealed much about their sense of place within the Romantic poetic space; neither poet could imagine a world without lakes and mountains, but what they did with these familiar features identified unique poetic spaces in which to challenge the notion of themselves as weaker, ephemeral thinkers.

### Chapter 3: Mapping Fairyland: *Phantasmion* and Ejuxria

Hartley, Derwent and Sara grew up in a household that was fascinated by maps. Their uncle Southey confessed that he had a 'love of maps'.<sup>1</sup> He spent much of their formative years, from 1809 to 1817, in correspondence with some of Britain's foremost mapmakers – including the Arrowsmith family – over the production of a fold-out map for his *History of Brazil* (1817).<sup>2</sup> At Greta Hall, a 'great map' hung on the wall of the landing,<sup>3</sup> and Southey wrote several letters to friends to tell them that he had been 'dreaming over the map' to plan his travels.<sup>4</sup> Southey, like Sara after him, believed that maps were an important educational tool; in 1804, just at the moment when STC was setting off for Malta, Southey bought Hartley a dissected map. He was

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<sup>1</sup> Letter: Robert to Thomas Southey, 31 December 1803. Southey describes how he had recently purchased John Pinkerton's *Modern Geography* (1802) for the sake of the maps it contained. See *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey Part Two: 1798-1803*, ed. by Ian Packer and Lynda Pratt (Romantic Circles, 2011) <[https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters/Part\\_Two/HTML/letterEEEd.26.876.html](https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Two/HTML/letterEEEd.26.876.html)> [accessed 5 December 2014].

<sup>2</sup> The Arrowsmiths were in business from 1777 to 1873, first under Aaron and then John Arrowsmith. In Southey's day, they were particularly famous for their influential map of post-revolutionary North America, and so they must have seemed an apt choice for Southey's map of Brazil. See Yolande Hodson, 'Maps, charts and atlases in Britain, 1690-1830', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. V: 1695-1830*, ed. by Michael F. Suarez, S.J. and Michael L. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.762-80; p.763.

<sup>3</sup> Letter: Robert to Thomas Southey, 22 November 1808, *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey Part Three: 1804-1809*, ed. by Carol Bolton and Tim Fulford (Romantic Circles, 2013) <[https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters/Part\\_Three/HTML/letterEEEd.26.1540.html](https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Three/HTML/letterEEEd.26.1540.html)> [accessed 5 December 2014]. He wrote to Edith Southey a few years later to help her find the copy of Mary Russell Mitford's novel *Christina*, which 'used to be opposite the map' (Letter: Robert to Edith Southey, 5-7 September 1813, *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey Part Four: 1810-1815*, ed. by Ian Packer and Lynda Pratt (Romantic Circles, 2013) <[https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters/Part\\_Four/HTML/letterEEEd.26.2299.html](https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Four/HTML/letterEEEd.26.2299.html)> [accessed 5 December 2014].

<sup>4</sup> In October 1814, for example, Southey used the map to plan a prospective journey to Spain. See Letter: Robert Southey to John Rickman, 16 October 1814, *Letters of Southey Part Four* <[https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters/Part\\_Four/HTML/letterEEEd.26.2488.html](https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Four/HTML/letterEEEd.26.2488.html)> [accessed 12 December 2014], and Letter: Robert Southey to Herbert Hill, 16 October 1814, *Letters of Southey Part Four* <[https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters/Part\\_Four/HTML/letterEEEd.26.2487.html](https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Four/HTML/letterEEEd.26.2487.html)> [accessed 12 December 2014].



delighted when Hartley quickly learned the locations of all of the English counties ‘as well as anyone in the household’.<sup>5</sup>

Southey also recognised the poetic potential in cartography. Writing to Mary Barker in February 1812, he outlined an idea for a new poem which would ‘get the world staring even more than Kehama has done’:

I want to see if I cannot make a Heaven of my own, & believe in it into the bargain. [...] The possibility I feel, & have a better map of Heaven in my head than ever Swedenborg had, tho to be sure it is not quite so definite in all its parts. Now I believe this would not only be a very delightful task but that it would be a very useful one as well, for my Heaven is such a one that whether the reader chose to believe it or not, it would lay hold of him & as much alter his feeling of death & immortality as the *Paradise Lost* modified his notions of Adam & Eve – or to come nearer the mark, as Shakespeare influences his conceptions of Richard the Third & Henry 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>6</sup>

Southey recognises his Heaven as an autonomous poetic space but one which, he rather grandly claims, would influence the ways in which his readers conceived their own Heavens. The map he alludes to is not an object of geographic specificity: in fact, it is distinctly not ‘definite’. Southey implies that cartography’s role in poetry was not to make imaginary or other-worldly places concrete but rather to provide a flexible way of visualising them, a realisation to which critics have increasingly arrived in the

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<sup>5</sup> Letter: Robert Southey to STC, 12 March 1804, *Letters of Southey Part Three* <[https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters/Part\\_Three/HTML/letterEEd.26.911.html](https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Three/HTML/letterEEd.26.911.html)> [accessed 23 November 2014].

<sup>6</sup> Letter: Robert Southey to Mary Barker, 13 February 1812, *Letters of Southey Part Four* <[https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters/Part\\_Four/HTML/letterEEd.26.2037.html](https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Four/HTML/letterEEd.26.2037.html)> [accessed 12 December 2014].

last few years.<sup>7</sup> He imagines that his map would uniquely reveal spatial relationships which would be concealed by a poem alone.<sup>8</sup> Southey recognises that a map is what Damian Walford Davies calls a “made” thing, a culturally constructed, circulating text and intertext, loaded with the values of its makers, conditioning space’.<sup>9</sup> Walford Davies seeks to challenge Franco Moretti’s readings of maps onto literary texts by articulating ‘a dynamic conception of literary works as *always already* cartographically active’; that is, for Walford Davies the texts are themselves maps, as well as being mappable.<sup>10</sup>

In this chapter, I want to demonstrate how Hartley and Sara displayed a geophilosophical approach towards maps as creative tools, and to suggest how they used cartographic practices to express their agoraphobic poetics. The chapter focuses on two manuscript documents: Sara’s map of her fairy tale, *Phantasmion*, and Hartley’s of his imaginary kingdom, Ejuxria. In reading these documents, I echo Hewitt’s assessment of Blake’s approach to cartography: that ‘analysis of [their] geographic references using realist, geometric mapping practices reveals very little’, but ‘attention to [their] personal approach to cartography can assist a more

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<sup>7</sup> Damian Walford Davies provides a helpful summary of the incursion of ‘mapping’ into literary studies in *Cartographies of Culture: New Geographies of Welsh Writing in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press: 2012), pp.3-7. Les Roberts’s summary of modern critical responses to cartography as an interdisciplinary tool is also important; see ‘Mapping Cultures: A Spatial Anthropology’, in *Mapping Cultures: Place, Practice, Performance*, ed. by Les Roberts (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.1-25. Finally, Robert T. Tally Jr offers an invaluable overview of the development of geocriticism in ‘Introduction: On Geocriticism’, in *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp.1-9.

<sup>8</sup> Janelle Jenstad shows how maps can uniquely reveal spatial relationships or hidden meanings in literature. See ‘Using early modern maps in literary studies: Views and caveats from London’, in *Geohumanities: Art, history, text at the edge of place*, ed. by Michael Dear, Jim Ketchum, Sarah Luria and Douglas Richardson (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp.112-19.

<sup>9</sup> Walford Davies, pp.8-9.

<sup>10</sup> Walford Davies, p.14, original emphasis. He refers to Franco Moretti’s seminal work *Maps, Graphs, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* (London and New York: Verso, 2005; repr. 2007).

sympathetic reading of [their] textual landscape[s]'.<sup>11</sup> I suggest that reading these maps can provide insight into Hartley's and Sara's conceptions of their place within the Lake School.

As will be seen, in Sara's case the map acted as an important method through which she developed her Fairyland. Her map is scarcely more than a rough line drawing, yet it reveals the hitherto unacknowledged means by which she altered the landscape of her native Lake District landscape to suit her adult imaginative ends. Hartley's map, on the other hand, grew out of the 'text'. The stories Hartley recited to his bemused but enthralled listeners were set in his imaginative kingdom but, because of the more or less exclusively oral nature of their transmission, the map is almost the only Ejuxrian document that remains.<sup>12</sup> By closely examining the material and topographical details of these maps, I suggest that they were crucial documents in the articulation of Hartley's and Sara's agoraphobic poetics. In both cases, the ways in which these spaces are bounded illuminate these writers' imaginative responses to how their surroundings were affected by and understood through their precursors' more famous works. These maps are what Cooper would term 'authorial maps'; they are 'embedded within literary texts' and 'within a writer's own compositional spaces'.<sup>13</sup> Both maps are fundamental to understanding the creation of Hartley and Sara's texts, and to a wider appreciation of their spatial poetics.

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<sup>11</sup> Hewitt, 'Mapping and Romanticism', *Wordsworth Circle*, 42.2 (2011), pp.157-65; p.163.

<sup>12</sup> With the exception of Derwent's (not entirely trustworthy) recollections in the 'Memoir' and one dramatic fragment, 'The Ghost in the Wood'. This dramatic fragment was scripted to be acted by the Portfomandrane, citizens of one of the major Ejuxrian cities (*HCP*, I, pp.ccxxvii-ccxxviii).

<sup>13</sup> Cooper, 'Critical Literary Cartography: Text, Maps and a Coleridge Notebook', in *Mapping Cultures*, pp.29-52; pp.42-43.

This chapter does four things: firstly, it outlines the contemporary mapping culture out of which Hartley's and Sara's cartographic impulses developed; secondly, it reveals why the Lake District continued to be so important for Hartley's and Sara's agoraphobic imaginations; it then demonstrates how Sara's map of *Phantasmion* was a fundamental part of her text's creation; and finally, it suggests how Hartley's map can be read to provide insight into his perception of his place within the Lake School. It builds upon Chapter 2 in indicating some of the ways in which the concept of Fairyland as a creative metaphor altered during the Romantic period.

Their maps indicate the ways in which Hartley and Sara modified and reconceived the spaces made famous by their poetic precursors in highly individual ways. They expanded upon and subverted their precursors' responses to nature to express unique phenomenological standpoints. Leadbetter describes how, for STC, 'nature was less an end-value in itself than the *open-ended*, living medium of human transformation', whereas for Wordsworth nature 'contains [...] his own transnatural impulses, and satisfies these impulses even as they are subordinated to nature as an end-value in itself'.<sup>14</sup> The maps reveal that Hartley's and Sara's imaginative responses to landscape share STC's agenda; they constitute adaptations of the Lake District that reveal nature imaginatively transformed to fulfil specific creative ends. Although their initial 'transnatural impulses' are Wordsworthian responses to the external world, the maps ultimately indicate an Esteesian belief in an ongoing, interactive process between themselves, the natural world and previous texts. These documents suggest the ways in which what de Certeau would call the 'spirits'<sup>15</sup> of their precursors could

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<sup>14</sup> Leadbetter, p.53, original emphasis.

<sup>15</sup> De Certeau, p.108.

be invoked so as to enter into imaginative conversation without allowing their forebears' interpretations of the landscape to become overpowering. In de Certeau's terms, these are spaces of 'plurality', and recognising the careful ways in which precursors are referenced is fundamental for an understanding of precisely how that plurality works.

What Cooper argues of Norman Nicholson's poetry in relation to Wordsworth is evident, too, in Hartley's and Sara's maps; that is, these documents imply an attitude towards their precursors which 'oscillates between reverence and subversion', a response that 'both draws upon and critiques the earlier poet[s]'.<sup>16</sup> Their maps indicate what Graham Huggan would term a 'rhizomatic' engagement with Wordsworth's and STC's poetic places, but they also carefully close off their own autonomous spaces.<sup>17</sup> This complex spatial engagement allows both poets to reconstruct the Lake District to reflect their unique phenomenological perspectives without seeming to overtly challenge dominant cultural practices. The multifaceted reactions expressed through the maps allow for the recognition that Hartley and Sara were aware that

the (Romantic) intertextuality of space can facilitate the development of a complex and palimpsestic engagement with landscape which allows the writer to transcend the imaginative limitations often associated with geo-specific regional writing.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space', p.816.

<sup>17</sup> Graham Huggan, 'Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism and the Cartographic Connection', *Ariel*, 20.4 (1989), pp.115-31; p.126.

<sup>18</sup> Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space', p.816.

Mapping their imaginative spaces allowed Hartley and Sara to move away from established Lake District tropes, yet they do so in a way that did not deny their identification with the Lake School. They found in their maps a way of visualising the tensions inherent to their interactive poetics.

In Esteesian terms, the map is something on which a 'co-existent multitude' can be located. The map both reveals and contains its social, cultural and geographic preconditions, and it does so, in Skelton's words, because every map is 'a synthesis of experience' that draws together personal experiences with political, and sometimes commercial, intent.<sup>19</sup> The phenomenological experiences of the creator are made manifest through the map's foci.<sup>20</sup> To put it simply, 'maps are never neutral'.<sup>21</sup> All maps, regardless of their specific purpose, depict a 'desire for control expressed by the power-group or groups responsible for the articulation of the map'.<sup>22</sup> An important part of map-reading is determining what kinds of power structures they uphold or challenge,<sup>23</sup> and what 'tactics' are being deployed to undercut the dominant strategic narrative.<sup>24</sup> In Hartley's and Sara's cases, Wordsworth and STC remain

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<sup>19</sup> R.A. Skelton, *Maps: A Historical Survey of Their Study and Collecting* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), p.3.

<sup>20</sup> Multiple critics have made this point. See: Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p.82; Sarah Luria, 'Thoreau's Geopoetics', in *Geohumanities*, pp.126-38; Gillian Rose, 'On the Need to Ask How, Exactly, is Geography "Visual"?', *Antipode*, 35.2 (2003), pp.212-21; p.213 (quoted in David Howard, 'Cartographies and Visualization', in *A Concise Companion to Postcolonial Literature*, ed. by Shirley Chew and David Richards (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp.141-61; p.144); Rhonda Lemke Sanford, *Maps and Memory in Early Modern England: A Sense of Place* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p.12; Jacinta Prunty, *Maps and map-making in local history* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), p.206; Paul Hindle, *Maps for Historians* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co., 1998), p.vii.

<sup>21</sup> Howard, p.156.

<sup>22</sup> Huggan, p.119.

<sup>23</sup> Prunty, p.316.

<sup>24</sup> De Certeau, p.18.

implicitly present in the maps, but the documents demonstrate the ways in which Hartley and Sara wrested control for themselves in their own imaginative landscapes.

The maps of Ejuxria and the fairyland of *Phantasmion* enact Sonia Hofkosh's assertion that 'the other who threatens the creative self does so by participating in that self's creation'.<sup>25</sup> Hartley and Sara made the independent status of their imaginative spaces clear through careful reinterpretations of pre-existing spaces and places which simultaneously 'othered' them and invited interaction. Nicola Bown's suggestion that Fairyland was 'a place that is no place' is not straightforward.<sup>26</sup> In the cases of Ejuxria and *Phantasmion*, Fairyland was based on, but deviated from, the real landscape of the Lake District. The maps reveal these imaginative spaces' relationships to the real world but demonstrated, too, the ways in which they differed (a crucial element of Lefebvre's representational space).<sup>27</sup> By producing maps of their imaginative spaces, Hartley and Sara emphasised their Fairylands' statuses as representational spaces that were necessarily steeped in the history of place and its associated literature.<sup>28</sup>

The maps were, to some extent, playful documents, but they suggest Hartley's and Sara's resistance to writing within a tradition imaginatively controlled by Wordsworth and STC. The maps mark the edge of their precursors' poetic territories in their imaginations, and also identify the boundaries across which poetic influences may pass. Crucially, these boundaries mark out their autonomous creative spaces too.

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<sup>25</sup> Sonia Hofkosh, 'The Writer's Ravishment: Women and the Romantic Author – The Example of Byron', in *Romanticism and Feminism*, pp.93-114; p.109.

<sup>26</sup> Bown, p.175.

<sup>27</sup> Lefebvre, p.52.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.41.

The maps are not 'neutral mirror[s]' of Hartley's and Sara's imaginative landscapes.<sup>29</sup> They are assertions, much more forceful than their texts, of their sense of deserving an autonomous poetic space which nevertheless communicated with the established canon. The maps are spaces for their creators alone to utilise, but they exist as part of a network with other Romantic locales. Wordsworth's and STC's separate spaces may 'interpenetrate [...] and/or superimpose themselves' onto Hartley's and Sara's,<sup>30</sup> but they cannot overwhelm their Fairylands. The maps challenge the conception of Hartley's and Sara's works as being the product only of their anxieties of influence. I argue instead that these are true maps of misreading which offer a challenge to conventional approaches to their works as the products of 'weak' ephebes to the 'strong' Lake poets. The rapid cartographic developments in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provided a new way of demonstrating how their work was related to, yet distinct from, the poetic imagining of place and space articulated by STC and Wordsworth.

### **I. The early nineteenth-century mapping industry**

In *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840-1900*, Sally Shuttleworth asks why it was not until the early nineteenth century that children from diverse households began to map their imaginative worlds.<sup>31</sup> The answer might be discovered in a survey of the cartographic developments which took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. When Crabbe wrote of the

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<sup>29</sup> Klein, pp.110-11.

<sup>30</sup> Lefebvre, p.86.

<sup>31</sup> Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.79.



‘glowing chart of Fairyland estate’ he was sardonically referencing the impact of recent cartographic developments: in a time of mapping mania, it seemed inevitable that, at some point, the mapmakers would turn their attention to conceptual spaces. Maps were to become increasingly important throughout the Victorian period as a demonstration of Britain’s colonial power,<sup>32</sup> but by the Romantic era they were well-established as a means of indicating cultural power; maps implied Britain’s wide-reaching influences over the lands depicted. As I will demonstrate using *Phantasmion* shortly, the countries drawn on maps were idealised representations of the real thing; on a map, they could be written over or erased in a way that reflected political or militaristic aims.<sup>33</sup>

Hewitt notes that ‘the Romantic period marked a particularly complex moment in the history of western European cartography, when multiple conceptions of maps and mapping co-existed simultaneously’.<sup>34</sup> By 1830, the entirety of England (and most of Scotland and Ireland) had been published at the one-inch scale.<sup>35</sup> The mapmaking industry was highly interactive; maps tended to be created under temporary business partnerships. The fourth edition of *Britannia, or, a chorographical description of Great Britain and Ireland* (1772) had no fewer than thirty partners listed on the title page.<sup>36</sup> At the other end of the scale, projects like William ‘Strata’

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<sup>32</sup> Jane Jacobs writes: ‘[w]ithin the colonial project, the making of maps constructed a possessable “other” place (and people) and provided a practical guide for dispossessing “others” of their place’. See “‘Shake ‘im this country’: The mapping of the Aboriginal sacred in Australia – the case of Coronation Hill’, in *Constructions of Race, Place and Nation*, ed. by Peter Jackson and Jan Penrose (London: University College of London Press, 1993), p.100 (quoted in Howard, p.141).

<sup>33</sup> Huggan, p.121.

<sup>34</sup> Hewitt, ‘Mapping and Romanticism’, p.163.

<sup>35</sup> Hodson, p.779.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.762.

Smith's geological survey were undertaken singlehandedly.<sup>37</sup> Maps began to be used for more than simply military or nautical navigation purposes; they became recreational. Local maps came into higher demand as walking increased in popularity as a pastime.<sup>38</sup> Children's games (like the one Southey bought Hartley) made didactic use of mapmaking practices, and maps also appeared on handkerchiefs, playing cards and jigsaws. Yolande Hodson notes that in this era, too, 'maps of fantasy places, or with a modern message, found a ready clientele'.<sup>39</sup>

Eighteenth-century Britain witnessed a series of fundamental shifts in experiences of and interactions with the external world. Samuel Baker suggests that the introduction of the 'modern spatiotemporal grid' – longitude and latitude – changed how people saw the world.<sup>40</sup> The oceans were no longer vast, untameable expanses, but were divided up – at least on paper – into manageable, navigable and workable sections.<sup>41</sup> As I demonstrated in Chapter 1, reminders of the dangers of unbounded spaces were everywhere, from the enclosure of the landscape to the restraining of the 'mad'. Britain's rising status as a global power depended upon its management of carefully coarctated political, personal and geographical boundaries.<sup>42</sup>

The heightened knowledge of regional areas was reflected in the increasingly detailed maps of Britain. The European mapping industry had kept pace with the

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<sup>37</sup> See Simon Winchester, *The Map That Changed the World* (London: Penguin, 2002).

<sup>38</sup> Hewitt, *Map of a Nation*, p.310; Julia S. Carlson, 'Topographical Measures: Wordsworth's and Crosthwaite's Lines on the Lake District', *Romanticism*, 16.1 (2010), pp.72-93; p.74.

<sup>39</sup> Hodson, p.764.

<sup>40</sup> Samuel Baker, 'The Maritime Georgic and the Lake Poet Empire of Culture', *ELH*, 75.3 (2008), pp.531-63; p.532.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.533.

<sup>42</sup> Huggan observes that maps 'are shown to have operated effectively, but often restrictively or coercively, in the implementation of colonial policy' (p.115).

printing revolution, although Delano-Smith and Kain make the important point that this print revolution was matched by the expansion in production of manuscript maps too.<sup>43</sup> The widespread availability of maps after the sixteenth century had suggested new ways of imagining the local area in terms of broader global, social and cultural contexts.<sup>44</sup> Sanford suggests that in *The Faerie Queene*, for example, Spenser addressed a new 'map consciousness' when he referred to the 'New World'.<sup>45</sup> By the early nineteenth century, maps had been revealing details on diverse areas of British life for hundreds of years, charting agricultural issues, urban planning, defence strategies, the growth of industry and developments in scientific studies from geology to medicine.<sup>46</sup> In short, these cartographic developments, and those which followed, 'reflect[ed] the state of cultural activity, as well as man's perception of the world'.<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, the British mapping industry trailed behind the rest of Europe's. It did not start to catch up until the mid-eighteenth century. In 1754, the Society of Arts began to offer premiums and bounties for the production of large-scale maps, resulting in a rise of cartographic activity.<sup>48</sup> The formalising of the Ordnance Survey movement in 1791, the continued proliferation of county maps,<sup>49</sup> the increasing popularity of guide-books and the increasingly adventurous uses of maps ensured

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<sup>43</sup> Catherine Delano-Smith and Roger J.P. Kain, *English Maps: A History* (London: The British Library, 1999), p.11.

<sup>44</sup> See Simon Foxell, *Mapping England* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2008), pp.42-57.

<sup>45</sup> Sanford, p.42.

<sup>46</sup> Delano-Smith and Kain, p.11.

<sup>47</sup> Norman J. Thrower, *Maps & Man: An Examination of Cartography in Relation to Culture and Civilization* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1982), p.1.

<sup>48</sup> The prize was usually for £100 and ran until 1802, but Hewitt notes that in the nearly half a century it was running the Society of Arts only paid out £460 (*Map of a Nation*, p.51).

<sup>49</sup> Paul Hindle notes that county maps remained popular because the Ordnance Survey remained mostly military in purpose. He gives the Royal Society's prizes more credit than Hewitt does for the developments in county mapping in the latter half of the eighteenth century (p.114).

that by the turn of the century, maps had become a part of everyday life.<sup>50</sup> The first national British census, conducted in 1801, used maps to collate the data.<sup>51</sup> Map shops became a recognisable element of tourist towns; Peter Crosthwaite's shop in Keswick, for instance, sold maps of the local area, including ones depicting popular walking routes.<sup>52</sup>

According to Carlson, maps like Crosthwaite's 'prompted further developments in the visual and verbal articulation of British space' that were evidenced in contemporary poetry.<sup>53</sup> Discussions of mapping are complicated because maps act as both a metaphor for knowledge and a means of knowledge representation. Petchenik, one of the earliest scholars to recognise the metaphorical and phenomenological potential of maps, was right in suggesting that '[c]artographers are not concerned fundamentally with the nature of objects *per se*, but rather with a particular set of relations among those objects'.<sup>54</sup> De Certeau is similarly concerned with the ways in which maps display interactive spatial relationships. He writes that the map 'collates on the same plane heterogeneous places, some *received* from a tradition and others *produced* by observation'.<sup>55</sup> For de Certeau, the map is a site of interaction between reception and production, as well as between existing and new thinking: maps indicate an 'erasure of the itineraries'

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<sup>50</sup> Hewitt, *Map of a Nation*, p.4.

<sup>51</sup> Skelton, p.22.

<sup>52</sup> See Carlson. Also see Mark Haywood, 'Viewing the Emergence of Scenery from the English Lake District', in *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. by Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane and Peter Davis (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), pp.23-32; pp.29-30.

<sup>53</sup> Carlson, p.81.

<sup>54</sup> Barbara Petchenik, 'Cognition in Cartography', in *The Nature of Cartographic Communication*, ed. by Leonard Guelke, (Cartographica Monograph 19, 1977), p.117. Quoted in J.S. Keates, *Understanding Maps*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Longman, 1996), p.121.

<sup>55</sup> De Certeau, p.121.

which separate the two categories, allowing for fluid traversals between them. The place 'is a palimpsest', and the map acts as 'a totalizing stage on which elements of diverse knowledge are brought together'.<sup>56</sup>

These different elements could be dangerous to existing conceptions of space, as Huggan's discussion of colonial maps suggests.<sup>57</sup> In *Phantasmion*, Sara makes clear the power inherent to maps over real land. The reading of maps here is tantamount to an act of aggression. Phantasmion, disguised as a royal cupbearer, is asked by the Queen of Rockland, Maudra, to keep watch over her lover, Glandreth, who is in the process of plotting to conquer Phantasmion's kingdom, Palmland:

Glandreth was neither drinking nor sleeping, but drawing a chart of Palmland: with his face bent over the table, he had lifted his pen to mark the very spot where his invading host was to enter the country, at that same point of time when the young monarch, pressing his drum close to the wall, produced an indescribable and intolerable din, which not only made the apartment of Glandreth rock and resound like a belfry, but circulated around the castle, till every dome, and tower, and vault, rang again, and the whole edifice appeared to be a sounding cymbal in the hand of some mighty musician.<sup>58</sup>

The pen is lifted like a sword to penetrate the mapped landscape; Glandreth's act of 'drawing' suggests his claiming of Palmland. However, Phantasmion uses his cicada drum to disrupt Glandreth's cartographic invasion of his kingdom in a way which anticipates his victory over the real landscape later. Judith Plotz argues that

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.202.

<sup>57</sup> See Huggan.

<sup>58</sup> *Phantasmion*, pp.166-67. Future references to this edition will be included in the text.

Phantasmion's 'dreams are a kind of action',<sup>59</sup> and here he proves his ability to utilise dream-like powers in real life to prevent Glandreth's vicarious possession of his home. When Phantasmion enters the room after sounding the drum, Glandreth is in a death-like trance – 'his eyes fixed, his cheeks livid, and the wound upon his forehead sending forth a fresh stream of blood' (*Phantasmion*, pp.167-68) – that anticipates his later death in battle. Beside him is the 'blotted map' (*Phantasmion*, p.168). Glandreth's attempts to do away with provincial boundaries are foiled. As the fairy tale later suggests, the lands can only be united through interaction rather than violent influence.

*Phantasmion* highlights the importance of provincial identity. Each country maintains its unique identity, and it is only through Phantasmion's successful use of skills inspired by each region that he is, ultimately, victorious. Stafford indicates that the increased focus on provincialism, as witnessed by the changes to mapping cultures at the turn of the nineteenth century, implies a shift in power in favour of marginalised places and peoples:

[i]t is really a question of *re-centralizing*, since the writer who depicts a small, familiar society as if it were the whole world is challenging conventional ideas about the centre of power by placing London, Edinburgh, or Paris in the margins.<sup>60</sup>

Maps, particularly county maps and the Ordnance Survey, offered a similar challenge to notions of spatial 'power'. Wordsworth's poetry – like Burns's, Scott's and Clare's –

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<sup>59</sup> Judith Plotz, 'Childhood Lost, Childhood Regained: Hartley Coleridge's Fable of Defeat', *Children's Literature*, 14 (1986), pp.133-48; p.146.

<sup>60</sup> Stafford, p.86, original emphasis. Walford Davies and Tim Fulford observe the same phenomenon; see 'Introduction: Romanticism's Wye', *Romanticism*, 19.2 (2013), pp.115-25; p.115.

mirrored the effect of county maps in centralising the provinces. The focus of maps, guidebooks and poetry shifted away from London and towards places like the Lake District, the Wye Valley, Somerset, Ayrshire and Northamptonshire. In other words, cultural power was wrested from the city's grasp.<sup>61</sup> Provincial maps highlighted the counties as distinct regions, and the splitting up of the country into carefully bounded sections by the Enclosure Acts encouraged the development of a national awareness of the importance of limits for the containment of individual identity.<sup>62</sup>

As Mark Monmonier summarises, 'maps and other pictures help[ed] explorers share with readers their insights and discoveries about both large and minute parts of the world'.<sup>63</sup> As will be seen, they also allowed poets to share their conceptions of imaginary spaces. It was, perhaps, inevitable that the poets growing up in a time of such change, including Hartley and Sara as well as Keats, Byron and the Shelleys, were 'acutely sensitive to the subtler rhythms and transitions' of a rapidly changing world,<sup>64</sup> the growing borders of which were evidenced through the increasing number of available maps. It was perhaps inevitable, too, that some of these poets should react to this expansion with fear and caution. Like Wordsworth, Hartley and Sara discovered a comforting boundedness within the Lake District mountains.<sup>65</sup> The Lake District provided a reassuringly coarctated spot in which their agoraphobic

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<sup>61</sup> Walford Davies and Fulford, p.119.

<sup>62</sup> Hewitt observes that enclosure was 'hugely contentious', and many people sympathised with the labourers who had to rapidly adjust to new laws regarding their local space (*Map of a Nation*, p.139). McDonagh and Daniels make the important point that enclosure of common land indicated 'larger social narratives of exclusion and dispossession' (p.108).

<sup>63</sup> Mark Monmonier, *Mapping It Out: Expository Cartography for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.4.

<sup>64</sup> Roe, *John Keats*, p.22.

<sup>65</sup> Cooper writes that 'Wordsworth uses images of boundedness and enclosure to celebrate the everyday spatial experiences of those living within the Lakes' ('The Poetics of Place and Space', p.816).

poetics could flourish. Nevertheless, neither map is a true imitation of a real-world site. Unlike the Brontë children, whose maps of their imaginary region, Glass Town, reveal a space based directly upon the coast of Africa,<sup>66</sup> Hartley and Sara both modify real-world places to suit their imaginative purposes. In Sally Bushell's words, the maps act as 'intersubjective object[s]' which demonstrate the process of converting 'place into space and back again [...] in order to get somewhere'.<sup>67</sup> In other words, maps have the capacity to display a 'co-existent multitude' of personal agendas, and these motives are uncovered by the ways in which place is transformed into an imaginative entity. Hartley's and Sara's maps act as real-life 'props' in imaginative games that involve multiple people<sup>68</sup> – a schoolboy one for Hartley and a family endeavour for Sara – but they indicate something more, too: they reveal the poets' autonomous imaginative stances as part of an interactive Romantic canon.

## II. Establishing boundaries: the Lake District as Fairyland

In 'The Four Ages of Poetry', Thomas Love Peacock satirically mourns the influence of the Lake Poets on contemporary literature. He decries the 'herd of desperate imitators' which followed the examples of Wordsworth, STC and Southey.<sup>69</sup> The 'new tone to poetry' was founded upon what Peacock saw as a supernaturalisation of the natural world. Specifically, Peacock mocks the contradiction he finds in these poets'

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<sup>66</sup> Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars identify a map of Glass Town as situating the imaginary kingdoms on the east coast of Africa, split between the mainland and several nearby islands (*The art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.299-300). Winifred Genn (*Five Novelettes* (London: The Folio Press, 1971)) and Christine Alexander (*The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p.262n) suggest a resemblance to a map of north Africa, including the Gulf of Guinea, which appeared in the June 1826 issue of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

<sup>67</sup> Bushell, 'The mapping of meaning', p.78.

<sup>68</sup> Kendall L. Walton, *Mimesis as Make-believe: On the Foundation of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), p.52 and p.67.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Love Peacock, 'The Four Ages of Poetry', in *Thomas Love Peacock: Memoirs of Shelley and other Essays and Reviews*, ed. by Howard Mills (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1970), pp.117-32; p.117.



retreat to the Lakes and their subsequent founding of a new school of 'phantasy'.<sup>70</sup> Peacock was among the earliest commentators to recognise a connection between Fairyland as an abstract idea and the Lake District as a specific setting for it. A transformation occurs in Peacock's reading of the Lake Poets' works: Cumbria and Westmoreland are 'convert[ed]' into 'a sort of fairy land, which they peopled with mysterious chimaeras'. The 'rocks and rivers' which define the real Lake District landscape became the recognisable topographical signs of the Lake Poets' Fairylands.<sup>71</sup> The Coleridge family poets, particularly the 'faery voyager' Hartley and 'lady-fairy' Sara, were simultaneously the 'chimaeras' who populated the Lake Poets' imaginative landscape and the inheritors – 'imitators', as Peacock would have it – of a Fairyland tradition that remained topographically and poetically grounded in England.

For the Coleridge children, the Lake District became a defining element of their notions of personal identity. Writing to Derwent Moultrie from the Lake District in 1843, Derwent Senior wishes that his son could have accompanied him to 'this beautiful land, amid the scenes and companions of my own boyhood'.<sup>72</sup> Sara, too, recalled her childhood 'among Waterfalls, Mountains and Lakes' for little Derwy's and Herby's amusement in several interlinked poems.<sup>73</sup> On 16 May 1862, Derwent gave a lecture entitled 'Poetry as a teacher', in which he described himself by alluding to the setting in which he had grown up:

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.127.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Letter: Derwent Senior to Derwent Moultrie, July 1843, quoted in *DCL*, p.232.

<sup>73</sup> See 'When Herbert's Mama was a slim little maid', 'Young Days of Edith and Sara' and 'When Mama was young' in *SCP*, p.97, p.101 and pp.219-20n.

The child is the father of the man. To explain what I am I must tell you what I was. I was born in the loveliest of our English vales – but nature, as such, is not poetical. There must be an interpreter.<sup>74</sup>

The opening quotation, borrowed from Wordsworth, indicates the extent to which Derwent's sense of self was founded on a Wordsworthian response to the external world. The 'loveliest of our English vales' acts to encapsulate Derwent's being; it is the thing that most reveals 'what [he] was'. Derwent follows Wordsworth in acknowledging that the beauty of nature is in the eye of the beholder.

Derwent adopts a geocritical approach to his native vale, whereby the Lake District responds to unique phenomenological interpretations. The landscape reflects the viewer's feelings, so that the concrete landscape becomes uniquely affective with every glance.<sup>75</sup> This means that the poetry written about landscape, like the maps which depict versions of it, articulate certain ways of seeing it that are never stable. As Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift have argued of cityscapes, places 'perform the labels' which are ascribed to them.<sup>76</sup> In the case of the Lake District, it became mappable as a distinct entity because it was repeatedly represented as being a place that was uniquely fertile with imaginative possibilities. Hartley maintained that the same source of inspiration could produce a multitude of responses:

Every sentiment that proceeds from the heart, every thought that emanates from the individual mind, or is suggested by personal observation, is original,

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<sup>74</sup> 'Poetry as a teacher', quoted in *DCL*, p.21.

<sup>75</sup> Heather Yeung, 'Affective Mapping in Lyric Poetry', in *Geocritical Explorations*, pp.209-22; p.209.

<sup>76</sup> Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p.23, quoted in Ceri Morgan, *Mindscape of Montréal: Québec's urban novel, 1960-2005* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p.135.

though, in all probability, it has been thought and felt a thousand times before  
(‘A Preface That May Serve for All Modern Works of Imagination’, *E&M*, I,  
p.70).

Hartley and Sara used their maps to portray how their imaginative circumscriptions of the Lake District landscape created unique phenomenologies of perception which enabled them to transform the Wordsworthian Lake District into deeply personal and autonomous imaginative arenas. The documents act as evidence of the ‘poetic eyes’ through which Hartley and Sara, like Derwent, viewed their ‘native vale’.<sup>77</sup>

Sara anticipated Derwent’s views on the subject when she wrote to a friend in 1835 that ‘we all know that the circumstances of our childhood give the prevailing hue to our involuntary tastes and feelings for the rest of our lives’.<sup>78</sup> The Lake District’s influence is evident in many of Sara’s works. Hartley, who rarely left the Lake District throughout his life, recognised in himself a provincial imagination which preferred ‘mossy nook[s] [...] or one of those self-sufficing angles which are a dale in miniature’ (‘Books of My Childhood’, *E&M*, I, p.346) to the vistas he could see from the mountaintops. Both poets persisted in imagining their creative impulses as being contained within the Lake District. However, they were acutely aware that they were writing about a landscape that was already firmly associated with a small group of eminent writers. Hartley admonished his readers that there was

a strange idea of the lakes – as if they constituted a sort of rural Grub-street –  
as if rhyme, rhythm, blank verse, and English hexameter were the vernacular

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<sup>77</sup> Lucy Aiken wrote of Sara in August 1830 that: ‘[s]he speaks of nature like one who has seen it with poetic eyes’. Quoted in Barbeau, *Life and Thought*, p.29.

<sup>78</sup> Letter: Sara to Emily Trevenen, October 1833, in *ML*, p.74.

dialect of the hills – as if Windermere were a huge puddle of ink, and the wild geese, when they fly over our vales, dropped ready-made pens out of their pinions ('Ignoramus on the Fine Arts. No.1', *E&M*, I, p.190n).

Hartley alludes to a similar value judgement as Peacock; that is, that there is an untalented 'herd' of writers residing in the Lake District. Hartley defends his vocation against a common assumption that it is naturally inherited from the landscape in which he lives, asserting instead that there are only a small number of worthwhile writers in the area. Crucially, Hartley refers to 'the lakes' as a distinctive region, one characterised in the popular imagination by the profusion of verse which it inspires and marked out topographically by its encircling hills. Nevertheless, he denies that writing is a native pursuit in the region, and he hints that the writing of 'rhyme, rhythm, blank verse, and English hexameter' remain, even in the Lakes, an unusual pastime that communicates unique world views. Hartley and Sara were both aware of the need to modify their native landscape in order to assert their poetic originality. In order for their topographically-specific Fairylands to remain autonomous, they had to demarcate their imaginative spaces carefully in relation to their fellow Lake Poets' works.

The Lake District's status as an other-world was assisted by the fact that the mountains seemed to enclose the district, separating it from the rest of England in a way which protected and preserved an element of archaic life that seemed to visitors to encourage a utopic experience; one traveller described the Lakes as being like a 'Northern Arcadia'.<sup>79</sup> On contemporary maps, the old counties of Westmorland,

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<sup>79</sup> John Murdoch (ed.), *The Discovery of the Lake District: A Northern Arcadia and Its Uses* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984). Quoted in Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space', p.813.

Cumbria and North Lancashire 'occupied an almost peninsula status within the geography of Great Britain';<sup>80</sup> as Cooper and Gregory suggest, '[t]he apparent boundedness of this environment offers a clearly defined and mappable terrain'.<sup>81</sup> This boundedness meant that it presented the ideal location on which to base imaginary worlds. The limits of the real place could be transformed into imaginative boundaries which served to demarcate the poet's autonomous Fairyland. In Cooper's words, '[t]he configuration of the Lake District as a circumscribed space [...] emerged out of a Lefebvorean interpenetration of the topographical and the imaginative, the physical and the aesthetic'.<sup>82</sup> This kind of 'interpenetration', combined with a Bachelardian oneirism, resulted in a series of unique imaginative spaces. The Lake District's natural boundaries provided a useful container for multiple expressions of agoraphobic poetics, which allowed it to be phenomenologically transformed into a series of representational spaces made unique by the viewer's individual response.

The construction and negotiation of boundaries was crucial to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century imaginations. Although for Merleau-Ponty consciousness itself is dependent upon the fixing of limits,<sup>83</sup> in Lefebvre's terms it is not the boundary that is important in myths of Romantic creativity. What matters is the relationship those boundaries imply between imaginary, or imaginative, spaces.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, David Livingstone and Charles Withers suggest that the '*movement* of ideas

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<sup>80</sup> Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space', p.813.

<sup>81</sup> David Cooper and Ian M. Gregory, 'Mapping the English Lake District: a literary GIS', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36 (2010), pp.89-108; p.90.

<sup>82</sup> Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space', p.813.

<sup>83</sup> Merleau-Ponty, p.32.

<sup>84</sup> Lefebvre, p.193. Davidson identifies problematic responses to these boundary relationships as being a central component of the agoraphobic experience (*Phobic Geographies*, p.20).

across borders and over time' was a defining characteristic of the Enlightenment.<sup>85</sup> For Chloe Chard, too, it is the 'traversal' of boundaries that becomes important in the early nineteenth century.<sup>86</sup> In the kind of agoraphobic poetics I have been outlining, what is important are the ways in which that movement is arrested. Blake's imaginative realms – Ulro, Generation, Beulah and Eden – all depended upon their boundaries to maintain their separate identities, but the correspondence between them formed a crucial component of Blake's mythopoesis. Blake's Eden is the most constricted of these places; for him, ultimate imaginative order depends upon being confined within tight limits.<sup>87</sup> In direct contrast to Hartley, for Blake the poet must seek to enter Eden in order to undergo a gnostic transformation.

In Shelley's sonnet 'Ozymandias', boundlessness indicates the refusal of the landscape to be perennially delimited. Its resistance to having human meaning imposed upon it renders Ozymandias's creative acts pointless: the desert wasteland, 'boundless and bare', is all that remains of Ozymandias's kingdom.<sup>88</sup> Sara recognised the need for coarctated boundaries as a symptom of the Estesian tradition:

I feel the most complete sympathy with my father in his account of his literary difficulties. Whatever subject I commence, I feel discontent unless I could pursue it in every direction to the farthest bounds of thought, and then, when some scheme is to be executed, my energies are paralyzed with the very

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<sup>85</sup> Charles W.J. Withers and David N. Livingstone, 'Introduction', in *Geography & Enlightenment*, ed. by Charles W.J. Withers and David N. Livingstone (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp.1-28; p.4, original emphasis.

<sup>86</sup> Chloe Chard, 'Crossing Boundaries and Exceeding Limits: Destabilization, Tourism and the Sublime', in *Transports: Travel, Pleasure, and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830*, ed. by Chloe Chard and Helen Landon (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996), pp.117-49; p.126.

<sup>87</sup> See Bloom, *The Visionary Company*, pp.14-17.

<sup>88</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ozymandias', l.13, in *The Poems of Shelley: Volume 2 1817-1819*, ed. by Kelvin Everest and Geoffrey Matthews (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1989; repr. 2000), p.311.

notion of the indefinite vastness which I long to fill. This was the reason that my father wrote by snatches. He could not bear to complete incompletely, which every body else does.<sup>89</sup>

Sara imagines herself to be overcome by the 'indefinite vastness' of her own imaginative potential. She recognises what Ozymandias did not: that restrictions are necessary to maintain control. Sara describes a tension between the active imagination and enforced passivity: she 'pursue[s]' her thoughts but inevitably finds that this excess of activity 'paralyze[s]' her. She finds that she can only follow her thoughts so far before she is overwhelmed by an imaginative agoraphobia. Concrete limits are necessary for poetic creation, because they provide a space which the poet can, realistically and artistically, 'fill'. Fairyland, like Ozymandias's kingdom, illustrated the Romantic need for coarctated boundaries in the successful creation myth. The Lake District provided a natural amphitheatre on which to stage these agoraphobic visions.

Unlike other utopic spaces, including Utopia, Paradise and Atlantis (which, as Wordsworth notes, was 'Sought in the Atlantic Main' (*Home at Grasmere*, 1802, p.103), Fairylands in the Spenserian tradition were anti-cartographic:<sup>90</sup> they sought to evoke a mythic England as an idea, rather than as a specific area. The geography of Hartley's and Sara's imaginative spaces seems to have been unusual in terms of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- centuries' Fairyland tradition. Donne may have been right to opine that '[n]o Man is an *Il*and', but from Thomas More onwards

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<sup>89</sup> Quoted in Mudge, p.99.

<sup>90</sup> Klein, p.74.

utopias almost invariably were.<sup>91</sup> Stewart suggests that the utopic space's island status is 'absolutely necessary': '[t]he miniature world remains perfect and uncontaminated by the grotesque so long as its absolute boundaries are maintained'.<sup>92</sup> Robinson Crusoe's island, Lilliput, Treasure Island and the Pacific island on which *Lord of the Flies* is set all recall subversively the utopic space, and they similarly rely upon their separation from the rest of the world to remain intact. Eighteenth-century explorers also brought back tales of utopian Pacific islands that encouraged these kinds of myth, although these fictions were already being mocked.<sup>93</sup>

Hartley's map of Ejuxria and Sara's of *Phantasmion* imply the writers' attempts to 'make sense of relationships in space, and to communicate them to others'.<sup>94</sup> In doing so, they enact what STC would call a 'continentalist' imagination. STC distinguished a peculiarly British element in the Utopic tradition:

Peter Wilkins [an eighteenth-century utopian fantasy] is to my mind a work of uncommon beauty [...] I believe that Robinson Crusoe and Peter Wilkins could only have been written by islanders. No continentalist could have conceived either tale [...] It would require a very peculiar genius to add another tale, *ejusdem generis*, to Robinson Crusoe and Peter Wilkins. I once projected such a thing; but the difficulty of a pre-occupied ground stopped me. Perhaps La Motte Foqué [*sic*] might effect something; but I should fear that neither he, nor

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<sup>91</sup> John Donne, 'Seventeenth Meditation', in *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. by Anthony Raspa (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975), p.87; Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. with an introduction and notes by Paul Turner (London: Penguin, 1965; repr. 2003).

<sup>92</sup> Stewart, p.68.

<sup>93</sup> See Nicola Pohl, 'The Quest for Utopia in the Eighteenth Century', *Literature Compass*, 5.4 (2008), pp.685-706; Percy G. Adams, *Travellers and Travel Liars* (New York: Dover, 1962; repr. 1980).

<sup>94</sup> Prunty, p.15.



any other German, could entirely understand what may be called the 'desert island' feeling. I would try the marvellous line of Peter Wilkins, if I attempted it, rather than the *real* fiction of Robinson Crusoe.<sup>95</sup>

Low believes that this notebook entry provided Sara with some inspiration for *Phantasmion*. STC, however, describes a very different kind of space to that in *Phantasmion*. STC's projected utopic work depends upon articulation of the 'desert island' feeling. He requires a utopia that is entirely uninhabited: several notebook entries fantasise about the romantic and imaginative possibilities of uninhabited places like 'desert cities' or the moon (CN, I.1, I.7 and I.10).<sup>96</sup> For both STC and Wordsworth, the 'continentalist' imagination represented a lack of independence; for them, the sea was crucial in establishing autonomy, both politically and poetically.<sup>97</sup>

These poets' adherence to an island imagination puts the peninsula or enclave in an odd position: it is neither an island – independent – nor continental. Wordsworth was of the opinion that the Lake District had maintained its ancient customs long after the rest of the kingdom because it lay 'out of the way of communication with other parts of the Island'.<sup>98</sup> Hartley's and Sara's maps indicate a similarly fraught interplay between isolation and community: their kingdoms, like the Lakes, appear to be separated from the rest of the land, but are nevertheless still geographically part of larger landmasses. The maps, then, lean towards a 'continentalist' imagination which contrasts with STC's conception of the creation of

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<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Low, p.137.

<sup>96</sup> Coburn notes that Spenser also imagined the possibility of living on the moon, much to Ben Jonson's amusement (CN, I.10n).

<sup>97</sup> Samuel Baker, *Written on the Water: British Romanticism and the Maritime Empire of Culture* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2010), pp.153-54.

<sup>98</sup> William Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes, The Fifth Edition (1835), with an Introduction, Appendices, and Notes Textual and Illustrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906; repr. 1970), p.54.

English utopias, but are indicative of continentalism's spread in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Samuel Baker notes that by the time STC returned from Malta, the continental system was in place, making a geopolitical principle of the insularity that Coleridge imagines Wordsworth transcending in poetry, as he himself had struggled to transcend it in political practice.<sup>99</sup>

The Lake District offered an ideal topography through which to express this 'principle of [...] insularity'. As Wordsworth expressed in *Guide to the Lakes*, the comparative smallness of the lakes, and the resultant frequencies of 'boundary-line[s]', offered the viewer a landscape that was pleasingly dissected, simultaneously sublime and beautiful.<sup>100</sup> The topography of Hartley's and Sara's maps mimic that of the Lake District to reveal an insularity which enables them to demarcate their own creative spaces whilst continuing to develop interactions with their precursors. Their maps show regions that are part of an imagined continent of interacting countries, an approach unwittingly mimicked by the Brontë children's maps of Angria, Gondal and Glass Town.<sup>101</sup>

For Prunty, '[t]he fixing of boundaries is a fundamental purpose of most if not all mapmaking',<sup>102</sup> and that is certainly the case in Hartley's and Sara's maps. What these surrounding lands are like is not indicated, but the fact that the maps do not depict islands like previous utopic spaces is significant: it implies that Sara's and Hartley's imaginative spaces were conceived as part of an interactive network of

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<sup>99</sup> Baker, *Written on the Water*, p.158.

<sup>100</sup> *Guide to the Lakes*, pp.33-35, original emphasis.

<sup>101</sup> Alexander and Sellars, *The art of the Brontës*, p.156, pp.299-300. Lefebure & Daphne De Maurier wonder if Hartley and Branwell talked about Ejuxria and Angria when they met in the 1840s. See Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.312 and Du Maurier, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), pp.142-43.

<sup>102</sup> Prunty, p.232.

Romantic imaginative spaces that were carefully demarcated. What they were bounded against precisely is not revealed, but, as Bernard Klein recognises, what is not depicted on a map is often as crucial as what is shown:

[m]aps undermine, as well as affirm, a straightforward visual code of unrestricted visibility, and the topographical surface they purport to describe is subject to an interplay of visibility and shadow that hides and obscures while claiming to reveal and lay open. Luring the viewer into a seeming familiarity with the landscape on open display, the cartographic picture plane engages in moments of blindness and lucidity that either efface or bring into focus the conceptual and physical distance between the map and the territory it sets out to represent. Maps, that is, construct a conspicuous “absence” as much as [...] a mysterious “presence”.<sup>103</sup>

Sara followed Wordsworth in describing the Lakes as being a ‘land of light and shadow’,<sup>104</sup> and she and Hartley’s maps depict imaginative landscapes that are similarly founded upon the interplay between presence and absence. In both cases, the surrounding area is implied but not drawn in detail. These blank spaces serve as a reminder of what is not there. Whilst it is true that Sara’s map is a very rough sketch with a lot of missing information anyway, the significance of these implied borderlands should not be overlooked. Hartley’s map, on the other hand, is very detailed with very little blank space, and so the implied lands beyond Ejuxria indicate the importance of these surrounding areas. The blank spaces around Hartley’s and

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<sup>103</sup> Klein, p.9.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.191. Wordsworth wrote in his *Guide to the Lakes* that he did not know ‘of any tract of country in which, in so narrow a compass, may be found an equal variety in the influences of light and shadow upon the sublime or beautiful features of the landscape’ (p.26).

Sara's maps indicate that their Fairylands were imagined as being positioned in the midst of landmasses that were not theirs to depict. In other words, these Fairylands are surrounded by other peoples' imaginative spaces.

Where their own imaginative spaces fit within this implied network reveals much about their sense of place within a literary canon that is focussed on the Lake District and the poets who lived there. The maps are interpretations of landscapes which are simultaneously real and remembered, and recall poets long-absent in person but ever-present through their works. In other words, what these maps show is the 'motion' of these poets' minds in a specific landscape and the ways in which their creative identity is founded in relation to a 'co-existent multitude'. The maps indicate how their Fairylands deliberately arrest that motion, creating the conditions for the '*movement inhibition*' that is necessary for the successful expression of an agoraphobic poetics.<sup>105</sup>

### III. (Re-)mapping the 'native vale': *Phantasmion* in the Lake District

Sometime between the autumn of 1834, when the idea for Sara Coleridge's fairy tale *Phantasmion* was conceived, and the summer of 1837, when it was published, Sara drew a rough sketch of the imaginary landscape in which her tale was set. The map is scarcely more than a line drawing; it contains little detail beyond some early ideas of place names and suggestions as to where the key topographical features might be located. From the earliest reviews, commentators were certain that the world of *Phantasmion* was simply 'a glorification of the Lake Country',<sup>106</sup> or, more recently, 'a

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<sup>105</sup> Carter, p.9, original emphasis.

<sup>106</sup> G.A. Simcox, 'Review of *Memoirs of Sara Coleridge*', *Academy*, 86 (December 1873), pp.462-63; p.462.

kind of medieval Tuscany nestling into the Lake District'.<sup>107</sup> Sara confirmed on several occasions that this 'account of Fairy-land nature' was based upon her memories of what she called her 'native vale, seen through a sunny mist of dreamery'.<sup>108</sup> Because it was based on a landscape so familiar to readers of Wordsworth and STC, Sara's 'native vale' seemed to confirm her status as 'a Wordsworthian minor poet'.<sup>109</sup>

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**Figure 2: Sara's map for *Phantasmion*. Reproduced with permission of Priscilla Cassam and the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.**

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<sup>107</sup> Shirley Watters, 'Airy Dreams of Father and Daughter', p.11.

<sup>108</sup> Letter: Sara to Aubrey de Vere, 1846, in *Regions*, p.17.

<sup>109</sup> To borrow Bloom's description of Hartley. See *The Visionary Company*, p.198.

The map (Figure 2) supports the text in indicating the extent to which Sara's Fairyland was indebted to her memories of that 'native vale', but it does other things too: it demonstrates that Sara's conception of this imaginary world was more complex than has hitherto been recognised. The Fairyland of *Phantasmion* is not a simple repetition of established Lake District tropes, but a considered reconstruction of Sara's topographical childhood memories. When read alongside the text, Sara's map reveals the differences between this Fairyland and Wordsworthian and Esteesian imaginative landscapes. Sara imagined a highly personalised version of her childhood home, and, as the map indicates, her Fairyland swerves away from the Lake District claimed by Wordsworth for himself and by STC for Hartley. I suggest that the map invites a re-evaluation of *Phantasmion*, and indicates that Sara's fairy tale offered a distinctive development of the Romantic Lake District.

In one sense, *Phantasmion* is a quest narrative of the most common Romantic kind;<sup>110</sup> that is, a search for 'an unknown or inexpressible something which gradually leads the wanderer back toward his point of origin'.<sup>111</sup> But when the tale is compared with the hitherto overlooked map, it becomes apparent that this quest is not simply a representation of Sara's longing to return to her childhood. Instead, it expresses a desire, imaginatively – if unwittingly – expressed, to reside poetically in a space which she controlled. In this reading, *Phantasmion*'s quest – to learn to rule over his kingdom, repel the invasions of his neighbours and unite the various kingdoms in political alliance – comes to represent Sara's mission to identify her own imaginative

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<sup>110</sup> For detailed plot summaries of *Phantasmion*, see *Life and Thought*, pp.60-62, and Low, pp.137-38.

<sup>111</sup> Abrams, p.193. Bown identifies Fairyland as one such 'point of origin': '[i]n escaping to Fairyland, [the Victorians] dreamed themselves back home' (p.96).

space as a writer. In this Fairyland, she could express metaphorically her poetic independence without compromising her relationship with her immediate Romantic precursors. This reading of Sara's construction of Fairyland encourages a reassessment of her contribution to the second-generation Romantic canon, and suggests that Sara's relationship to her precursors was one of interaction rather than influence.

As I indicated in Chapter 1 (see p.70), the composition of *Phantasmion* was closely bound up with Sara's work on her father's writings,<sup>112</sup> as well as with Sara's stay in Ilchester in the autumn of 1836. *Phantasmion* is a tale of Sara's 'inward eye'. It was written to enliven her 'couch hours' when she was laid low by one of her frequent spells of post-natal depression.<sup>113</sup> She commented that it acted 'as a record of [her] recumbent amusements', evidence that she 'often had out of door scenes before [her] in a lightsome agreeable shape at a time when [she] was almost wholly confined to the house'.<sup>114</sup> Waldegrave demonstrates that, although Sara had 'multiple projects' at this time, *Phantasmion* proved to be the most beneficial for her distressed mental state: it was 'the one that most allowed her to escape the confines of the room'.<sup>115</sup> It should be remembered that, by all accounts, the decision to remain in her room was Sara's alone; she was encouraged to leave, and so the 'escape' Sara sought

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<sup>112</sup> Low (p.134) and Mudge (p.76) agree that the writing of *Phantasmion* was related to her reading of STC's works at this time, as well as with the beginning of her plans to defend his reputation against the likes of Thomas De Quincey and James Ferrier. Low suggests that the tale was begun sometime in 1835. Mudge does not suggest a specific date, but implies that Sara began writing the tale as part of her 'motherly duties' in late 1834, a date with which Jonathan Wordsworth agrees; see 'Introduction', *Phantasmion*, p.iv.

<sup>113</sup> Letter: Sara to Emily Trevenen, 20 July 1837, in *Regions*, p.7. For the first ten years of her marriage, Sara was almost constantly pregnant, although only two children survived (Mudge, p.2).

<sup>114</sup> Letter: Sara to Arabella Brooke, 29 July 1837, in *Regions*, p.8.

<sup>115</sup> Waldegrave, *Poets' Daughters*, p.184.

was from her emotional trauma as much as from the physical confines of her bedroom.

The close work, both on her own and her father's texts, afforded Sara a chance to consider the shaping spirit of her imagination:

Chemists say that the elementary principles of a diamond and of charcoal are the same; it is the action of the sun or some other power upon each that makes it what it is. Analogous to this are the products of the poet's mind: he does not *create* out of nothing, but his mind so acts on the things of the universe, material and immaterial, that each composition is in effect a new creation.<sup>116</sup>

Sara's 'elementary principles' are shared with her father, but the action of 'some other power' has produced two markedly different beings. The 'things' of Sara's universe were, inevitably, the 'elementary principles' of some of the best-known poetry of the era: STC's, Wordsworth's and Southey's. As Barbeau recognises, '[i]n the creation of *Phantasmion*, Sara Coleridge invokes memory in the formation of a natural world, [and] applies reason in the development of characters with duty and appetite'.<sup>117</sup> Sara's Fairyland in *Phantasmion* is built upon the same 'raw materials' as the Lake Poets' canonical imaginative spaces. Comparing the map to the text reveals how Sara's imagination is that 'other power' which acts upon the Lake District to form a 'new creation'. It was perhaps in Ilchester that the capital city of Rockland was named Diamanthine. This name, which recalls Sara's geological metaphor, indicates the extent to which the geography of *Phantasmion* was bound up with her thoughts on her poetic relationships.

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<sup>116</sup> Letter: Sara to Henry Nelson Coleridge, 25 October 1836, in *ML*, p.129, original emphasis.

<sup>117</sup> Barbeau, *Life and Thought*, p.64.



Sara's map of *Phantasmion's* Fairyland was hastily sketched on a torn scrap of paper. Like the tale itself, the map seems to have been part of an imaginative game with her young son, Herbert. Maps were a key tactic by which Sara educated her son. She used them to teach him his 'Jog-free' as well as religious studies and history.<sup>118</sup> Later, Edith joined these didactic games and as an adult she continued to read adventures which she could chart on a map:

I love to read of him who once

Adventurous sails unfurled,

And found beyond the Western wave

A new and brighter world (Untitled poem, HRC MS).

Edith describes the discovery of a New World, but it is a double meaning: the 'adventurer' discovers a geographic 'New World' whilst the reader discovers a 'brighter' imaginative landscape. Sara described this desire to imaginatively discover new places and be immersed in history as being 'so Coleridgean';<sup>119</sup> as I indicated in the Introduction, it was a quality which did not sit easily with engagement with the real, present world (see pp.14-15). Nevertheless, she encouraged her children's love of map-reading because she believed that it developed their intellectual capacities beyond mere rote-learning. She admitted to Henry that she was 'obliged to get up [her] geography and sacred history even to instruct a chick of this age – four years old on Tuesday'.<sup>120</sup> She discovered in her educational lack a broader phenomenological failing. She had been educated using provincial maps – presumably the type bought

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<sup>118</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.82.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p.82.

from Peter Crosthwaite in Keswick (a cousin of Greta Hall's owner, Mr Jackson, and a friend of the Coleridge-Southey family). She wrote to Henry that she did not have a map of the world with which to teach the children, but that if she did

[w]hen Herby looked for the River Amazon he would travel to it from England and would take in a general view of geography whenever he learnt any particular place. Up to years of adulthood I had confused notions of geography from having studied particular maps and not been shewn frequently the grand divisions and relative situations of Seas and Continents. This is what any child may learn to any extent by the exercise of scarcely any faculty but memory.<sup>121</sup>

Sara advocated the use of maps in teaching because they revealed similar qualities to those STC had discovered in his childhood reading of 'Faery Tales, & Genii &c &c'; that is, they revealed the 'vast' connections between the 'little things' of the world. Sara's 'notions of geography' are confused because her own education did not illustrate effectively the ways in which the world was connected. Maps, she believed, demonstrated the world was an interactive space. It was through understanding the 'grand divisions and relative situations' of the 'little things' of the world that unity could be located. By encouraging Herby to read 'natural history and geography [...] instead of sentimental trash', 'classical Fairy Tales instead of modern poverty-stricken fiction' and to study 'the great outlines of the globe instead of Chinese puzzles and spillikins' Sara hoped to instil in her son a similar love of the 'Great and the Whole' that her father had discovered in his juvenile activities.<sup>122</sup> *Phantasmion* was one way in which Sara took on 'the challenge to create new meaning and identity

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp.82-83.

in “humble tasks” that would ‘confer a rich and significant legacy upon her children’.<sup>123</sup> The map, and the fairy tale itself, offered Herby a coarctated means by which to further his education in the vastness of the imagination.

The landscapes of *Phantasmion* are based in part upon the places which fired Herby’s imagination in their map lessons. Sara wrote to Henry in the autumn of 1834 describing Herby’s cartographic entertainments:

To Herby the map is a sort of game, and one that contains far more variety than any play that could be devised. To find out Sumatra or Owhyhee, to trace the Ganges, and follow the Equator in every different map, is a supreme amusement; and the notions of hot and cold, wet and dry, icy seas and towering palm-trees, with water dashing, and tigers roaming, and butterflies flitting, and his going and seeing them, and getting into tossing boats, and climbing by slow degrees up the steep mountain, are occupying his little mind, and give a zest to the whole affair.<sup>124</sup>

Sara’s Fairyland combines elements of her own childhood home with her son’s vivid imaginative explorations. Palmland is a country filled, predictably, with ‘towering palm-trees’ (*Phantasmion*, pp.25-27). Tigridia is filled with wild tigers (p.31). The fairy Potentilla brings with her the ‘butterflies flitting’ (p.11), and various characters’ journeys on the sea provide examples of nautical adventure. Potentilla’s supernatural gifts to *Phantasmion* allow the young king to access a similar experience of landscape to Herby’s vicarious cartographic one. In short, *Phantasmion*’s topography becomes a way for Sara to bestow her imaginative inheritance onto her son: whilst the details of

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<sup>123</sup> Robin Schofield, ““Amaranths” and “Poppies””, p.69.

<sup>124</sup> Letter: Sara to Henry Nelson Coleridge, 4 September 1834, in *ML*, p.58.

the terrain in Sara's Fairyland are modelled on her childhood memories, the defining features of each area are designed for Herby's amusement.

The fantastical place names recall the linguistic games played by the extended family at Greta Hall. Sara's mother, aided by Southey, developed her own 'Lingo Grande'; Southey complained that she 'called me a Tomnoddycum, though my name, as she knows, is Robert'.<sup>125</sup> As Waldegrave observes, even the names of their many cats 'give some idea of the landscape of their [the Coleridge children's] imagination and the books which created it': Madame Bianchi, Ovid, Virgil, Pulchesia, Rumpelstiltskin, Lord Nelson and Hurleyburleybum wandered the house and gardens, embodying the verbal and imaginative playfulness encouraged under Southey's roof.<sup>126</sup> *Phantasmion's* place names demonstrate a rationale which recalls Greta Hall's 'Lingo Grande'. In a similar way to the 'Lingo Grande', the place names often describe in an obfuscated way the landscape which dominates the region. Rockland, bordered by mountains, and the neighbouring Almaterra (literally 'mother land') are both lake countries. Even Palmland bears more traces of Sara's childhood landscape than tropical climes: it is economically dependent upon agriculture, but crucially that industry is based upon the cows and sheep of a Lake District farming landscape and not the (more probable) arable lands of a richly fertile area. Agriculturally, if not horticulturally, Palmland is a northern country. Gemmaura, meanwhile, depends upon a mining industry.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Quoted in Waldegrave, *Poets' Daughters*, p.33.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p.10, and *Coleridge Fille*, p.10.

<sup>127</sup> Allen J. Scott notes that for centuries traditional livelihoods in the Lake District were dominated by sheep farming, with more varied forms of agriculture in the lowlands, as well as a small amount of mineral abstraction ('The Cultural Economy of Landscape and Prospects for Principle Development in the Twenty-first Century: The Case of the English Lake District', *European Planning Studies*, 18.10 (2010), pp.1567-90; p.1569).

Cooper and Gregory suggest that ‘a return to original manuscript material may offer critical insights into the role that maps played as a writer brought a particular text into being’, and Sara’s map does appear to have been instrumental in the genesis of *Phantasmion*.<sup>128</sup> The map seems to have been sketched in the early stages of writing the book. It was never published, and Swaab’s suggestion that much of Sara’s poetry was not perhaps intended to be seen by anyone beyond her immediate family can be applied to this document.<sup>129</sup> The numerous deletions suggest that the details of Sara’s Fairyland were by no means finalised when she drafted it, although the topography was not altered. For example, what eventually became Gemmaura appears on the map as Land of Gems, Goldland or The Rich Land; Rockland is The Land of Rocks or the Dark Land; Almaterra is labelled Vineland; Diamanthine is labelled simply as ‘Capital City’. Other places are erased from the narrative altogether:<sup>130</sup> the [Salt Towers] which separate Palmland from Rockland on the map are replaced by the river Mediana in the text; the [Region of Sleek] does not feature in the tale. There is evidence that Sara edited some details of the map at a slightly later date: [Pastaeoria] is relabelled as Tigridia. The fact that some obsolete details remain suggest that Sara was not diligent about updating the map once the writing of the fairy tale was properly underway.

The text emphasises the affinities between the real Lakes and this imaginary reinterpretation of them, but I suggest that the map complicates the picture: it highlights the ways in which, to use Harris’s words, ‘the fairy tale’s supernatural

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<sup>128</sup> Cooper and Gregory, p.91.

<sup>129</sup> Swaab, ‘Poems and Their Addresses’, p.45.

<sup>130</sup> Square brackets indicate tentative readings.

world coexists with its natural world in a single realm of being'.<sup>131</sup> To follow Franco Moretti, what exactly the map *does* needs to be established.<sup>132</sup> Moretti suggests that a map is not in itself an explanation, 'but at least it shows us that there is something *that needs to be explained*'.<sup>133</sup> Like the Brontës' maps of Gondal, Angria and Glass Town,<sup>134</sup> Sara's map clarifies her early conceptions of the tale's geographical spaces, across which the complex web of political, social and romantic connections are drawn. It also makes clear the ways that these fictional interactions can be applied to Sara's poetic relationships. I propose that this map was an important part of the creative process which allowed Sara to visualise her tale's position within the Romantic tradition. The map does something which the text cannot: it 'facilitate[s] a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes or events',<sup>135</sup> and it offers a way to 'make sense of relationships in space, and to communicate them to others'.<sup>136</sup> As I have suggested, like Spenser's description of Faery land, Hartley's map of Ejuxria, or the Brontë children's maps of their imaginary places, Sara's map of *Phantasmion* focuses on one imaginative realm which is a part of a continent of related poetic spaces. On Sara's map, adjoining lands are indicated beyond the lowermost border of Palmland, and implied in the undrawn regions beyond Nemerosa and Almaterra. Whilst Spenser's allegorical realm is surrounded by North Africa to the South and the Americas to the West (*Faerie Queene* III.iii.6.7-8), the spaces which confine Sara's Fairyland remain unnamed. However, as Bernhard Klein

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<sup>131</sup> Harris, p.25.

<sup>132</sup> Moretti, p.39.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., original emphasis.

<sup>134</sup> See Alexander and Sellars, *The art of the Brontës*, p.156 and pp.299-300.

<sup>135</sup> J.B. Harley and David Woodward, 'Introduction', in *The History of Cartography*, vol. I, ed. by J.B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.xvi.

<sup>136</sup> Prunty, p.15.

has suggested, *The Faerie Queene* is 'deeply anti-cartographic'; the geographical certainties implied by a map would 'undermine the didactic project of the poem as a whole'.<sup>137</sup> Sara's tale, on the other hand, arguably rejects such moralistic readings (see p.118), in that the map reinforces the narrative's suggestion that this tale is more about interaction than education. *Phantasmion's* plot hinges on emotional and political relationships between the regions named on the map, but the map implies that these interactions extend beyond the places identified by the text. The blank spaces at the edges of the map suggest regions which remain unmappable for Sara, but which are nevertheless crucial to the geographic integrity of her imagined place. These unnamed places form the boundaries that confine Sara's landscape.

Sara's resource is heightened subjectivity; her imaginary space must be located within her own psyche and not in the real world. The landscape that Sara remembered (she never returned to the Lake District after her marriage in 1829) had to be internalised and modified before it could be employed to demarcate an autonomous imaginative space, particularly because by 1837 Sara's 'native vale' from

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<sup>137</sup> Klein, p.74.

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### REASONS

**Figure 3: The reflected version of the map has been overlaid onto a map of the Lake District. The details (places and routes) from *Phantasmion* appear in black. Details from STC's 1802 tour of the Lakes appear in white, and are taken from Cooper and Gregory, *Mapping the Lakes*. (Map image ©2014 Google, © 2014 Infoterra Ltd and Bluesky.)**



Rydal to Keswick was firmly Wordsworthian.<sup>138</sup> The map of Sara's Fairyland suggests an alternative way of reading that landscape. It cannot replace the text because it cannot contain the details of *Phantasmion's* complex narrative.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, the map indicates the extent to which Sara had, in her own thoughts, separated this imaginative world from the Lake District.

The world of *Phantasmion* is not an echo of Wordsworth's Lake District: it is, literally and metaphorically, a reflection. Sara's Fairyland is Cumberland and Westmoreland as seen through the looking glass of its author's imagination. If the map is turned across its vertical axis, so that it becomes a mirror image of itself, the topographical affinities between Sara's Fairyland and her 'native vale' become clear (see Figure 3). The outline of this Fairyland seems to have been based on an existing map of the Lake District (or, at least, on Sara's memory of such a map).<sup>140</sup> The coastline mimics the actual Lake District coastline, and the estuary of the river Mediana, which flows from the Black Lake to the sea, correlates neatly with the mouth of the River Esk where it joins the Irish Sea at Ravenglass. The peninsula upon

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<sup>138</sup> A fact indicated by the burgeoning tourism industry in the Lake District as the Victorian period got underway. Scott notes that the Lake District became a popular tourist destination in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, encouraged by the profusion of publications of guidebooks, notably Thomas Grey's *Journal in the Lakes* (1769), Thomas West's *A Guide to the Lakes* (1778) and Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* (1810) (p.1571). See also Yoshikawa, *William Wordsworth and the Invention of Tourism*.

<sup>139</sup> As Trevor M. Harris, Susan Bergeron, and L. Jesse Rouse have suggested of Tolkien's maps of Middle Earth. See 'Humanities GIS: Place, spatial storytelling, and immersive visualization in the humanities', in *Geohumanities*, pp.226-40; p.230.

<sup>140</sup> As Carlson has demonstrated, Wordsworth's poetics were heavily influenced by developments in map-making, including his visits to Peter Crosthwaite's 'museum of curiosities' in Keswick. Crosthwaite's museum was 'a popular destination for visitors to Keswick, including Wordsworth, from 1780-1870' (p.74). It is inconceivable that Sara did not also visit it, particularly given the regularity with which Robert Southey, with whom Sara lived mentions the Crosthwaite family in his letters (see *Letters of Southey* <[http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters](http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters)> [accessed 14 January 2014]). Furthermore, Crosthwaite's maps of Britain praise the 'native isle', a phrase which Sara recalls in describing the Lakes as her 'native vale'.

which Anthemmina is imprisoned finds its double in the small protrusion south of Whitehaven. Further inland, the Black Mountains recall the mountains of the southern Lake District, including Black Combe, and are the backbone of this imaginative landscape. Iarine's home, the Black Lake, is an echo of Wastwater, the lake at the heart of Wasdale. The topographical similarity between the Lake District and the setting of *Phantasmion* highlights the influence that Sara's childhood home – and the poets associated with it – had over her creative thoughts. Nevertheless, the map simultaneously becomes a site of memory and of creation: Sara re-designs the Lake District landscape to reflect her imaginative independence. By drawing the map as a reflection of the real world, Sara acknowledges the similarities between her imaginary space, that of STC's 'Dejection: An Ode' and of Wordsworth's poetics. But this reflection is nevertheless integrally different from those existing spaces: it is a representation of a Lake District landscape that is conditioned by Sara's creative experiences.

The map reveals that Sara's imaginative responses developed out of her intellectual dialogues with her precursors, but it also indicates the ways in which she altered their ideas to suit her creative ends.<sup>141</sup> Sara's map also recalls her father's cartographic drawings of the Lake District from his 1802 walking tour. STC drew a series of line maps from the top of Scafell, including one of Wasdale (CN, I.1206). Kathleen Coburn notes that this map is drawn 'in quasi-mirror image, and the note

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<sup>141</sup> Barbeau summarises Sara's intellectual stance in relation to STC, Southey and Wordsworth when he writes that 'Sara modified many of the views these revered men shared with her, but under the continued influence of their ideas' (*Life and Thought*, p.35).

beside it does not altogether clarify things'.<sup>142</sup> STC describes places as being in a directional relationship to his line of sight; a 'bulging green Hill' is 'to my left', and the Dodd ('evidently the highest point between Buttermere & Ennerdale') is 'to my right' (CN, I.1208). Sara's description of the landscape in *Phantasmion* recalls STC's geographical descriptions. Although the text initially suggests that the Sea is to the south of Phantasmion's palace (*Phantasmion*, p.14), it is later described as being 'on the right hand' (p.26). This direction confirms that, both in the text and on the map, this Fairyland is a landscape where the real topography is reflected across a vertical axis; the usual directional orientations do not apply here. The location of Sara's imaginative looking glass is crucial; it is through this looking glass that Sara's poetic interactions occur.

In the words of Cristina Bacchilega, 'the tale of magic's controlling metaphor is the *magic mirror*, because it conflates mimesis (reflection), refraction (varying desires), and framing (artifice)'.<sup>143</sup> The 'mirrhour fayre' (*Faerie Queene*, III.ii.22.5, p.305) in this case is the only part of this landscape which is common to both the world of *Phantasmion* and the real Lake District: that is, the 'glassy sea' ('Elegiac Stanzas, Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle', l.4, *PWW*, V, p.258). Usually a mirror operates entirely by reflecting an object back to the viewer. The image in water, on the other hand, is much more nearly akin to Bacchilega's magic mirror: it refracts the image of the object. The new image is altered slightly as the light passes through the

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<sup>142</sup> Coburn, 'Introduction', CN, I, p.xxii. Coburn notes that the map was drawn from William Hutchinson's *The History of the County of Cumberland* (2 vols, Carlisle, 1794), which he copied even down to the slope of the printing of names, the spellings and the buildings (CN, I.1206n).

<sup>143</sup> Cristina Bacchilega, *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p.10, original emphasis.

water's surface, resulting in a modification of the original. For STC, the reflection in water provided access to an other-world. Thirlmere, for example, becomes for him a 'mirror of 3 miles distinct vision', which daemonically reflects Raven Crag: 'at every bemisting of the mirror by gentle motion [it] became a perfect vast Castle Tower, the corners rounded & pillar'd or fluted' (CN, I.1607). The Crag becomes a faery castle, an image of the architecture of the poet's mind.

For Sara, it was the sea near Ravenglass which acted as an imaginative looking glass. It was through this glass that she encountered her precursors and so enacted the confrontation that Bloom maintains is necessary for the poet to claim her imaginative independence.<sup>144</sup> The characters in *Phantasmion* do not travel across the sea. Indeed, any attempt to do so is punished, hence Anthemmina's captivity and *Phantasmion*'s broken wing. The real world is not for them. The water is the barrier between that Fairyland and this world, and where it meets the coast on the other side of this reflection – at the real Lakes, that is – the water inspires not Sara's poetry, but Wordsworth's.<sup>145</sup> By reversing the position of the sea, Sara's map makes clear the division between the real world and her Fairyland: this Fairyland may owe a topographical debt to the Lake District, but it is nevertheless a world that exists on the other side of the looking glass. Furthermore, it is a refracted image of the real world, one which reveals Sara's 'varying desires'; that is, it indicates the differences between Sara's imaginative landscape and those of her precursors.

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<sup>144</sup> Bloom, *Poetry and Repression*, p.2.

<sup>145</sup> Abrams notes the importance of reflection on the water to Wordsworth's poetry, finding in it a metaphor 'for the interdiffusion of two consciousnesses' (p.75).

In *Phantasmion*, Anthemmina's (Iarine's mother) plight suggests the importance of correctly interpreting the refracted image; her 'varying desires' are her downfall. She abandons her love for Pensilimer in favour of Dorimant because she misinterprets a refracted prophetic image. In her essay 'On the Disadvantages Resulting from the Possession of Beauty' (1826), Sara wonders about the feelings of 'the flattered belle, of her that is accustomed to be gazed at & raved about, when she examines her admired form & features in the glass?'<sup>146</sup> Edith perceptively noted that 'no one could possibly have written such an Essay, except from the standpoint of a personal experience', although she observes that, with 'characteristic *naïveté*', Sara never thought so.<sup>147</sup> Sara criticises the early nineteenth century's obsession with personal appearance, and partly blames novel reading for its continuation. The reader, she worries, perpetually longs for the inevitable 'silken eyelashes & the Grecian features' of the heroine.<sup>148</sup> She concludes that the woman whose sense of identity is based upon her reflection must have a fragile concept of herself. Nevertheless, to be 'wholly exempt' from caring about the mirror's reflection 'is for women almost impossible'.<sup>149</sup> Stewart summarises what Sara recognises as a specifically female issue when she writes that

[t]he face becomes a text, a space which must be 'read' and interpreted in order to exist. The body of a woman, particularly constituted by the mirror and thus particularly subject to an existence constrained by the nexus of external

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<sup>146</sup> 'On the Disadvantages Resulting from the Possession of Beauty', Mudge, pp.187-200; p.189. Sara Nyffenneger offers an astute and nuanced reading of the sociological implications of Sara's essay in 'The Mirror, Friend or Foe? Sara Coleridge and the Ill Effects of Society's Judgment on Female Appearance', *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 33 (2009), pp.89-95.

<sup>147</sup> Edith Coleridge, *Recollections*, p.9.

<sup>148</sup> 'On the Disadvantages Resulting from the Possession of Beauty', in Mudge, pp.187-200; p.188.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190.

images, is spoken by her face, by the articulation of another's reading.

Apprehending the face's image becomes a mode of possession.<sup>150</sup>

Anthemmina does not see her 'admired form & features'; her face is obscured by her silver pitcher. She therefore cannot possess her own face, meaning in this case that she does not correctly interpret the subject of the message. When Phantasmion is presented with the same image, he interprets it accurately: because he can see a refracted image of his face (the image in the water has a different expression to Phantasmion's actual demeanour), he is able to accurately interpret the journey he must take (*Phantasmion*, pp.119-20). Phantasmion's refracted face is like Sara's map: the furrows and streams on his real face recall the harsh landscape of the real Lake District, whilst the smooth brow of the refracted image is equivalent to the blank regions of Sara's map. It is across these uncharted areas that Phantasmion must travel to save his kingdom and find Iarine. Anthemmina's inability to see her own face denies her access to the map-substitute which could have saved her.

Phantasmion is quick to realise how Anthemmina's error occurred: 'the watery picture is my likeness, only like Dorimant, as I resemble my father' (*Phantasmion*, p.120). This 'likeness', as Anthemmina should have noticed, is a refraction: Phantasmion's face is a refracted form of Dorimant's (simultaneously like and unlike his father's), and Iarine's figure (her face is still obscured) is a refracted form of Anthemmina's. Just as Sara's map outlines an imaginary space that is a refracted version of her precursors' Lake District, her characters' faces recall their precursors but do not repeat them. In the text, Phantasmion's refracted image takes

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<sup>150</sup> Stewart, p.125.

the place of a map in acting as a guide for his future journeys: correctly reading the image leads Phantasmion to his goal.

Like Britomart's magic mirror, this refraction reveals to Phantasmion his future spouse, but Anthemmina's story reveals the dangers of misreading such a text. Hers is the fate of Narcissus, doomed by her fascination with the picture in the water, or of the un-admonished Eve, likewise fascinated by her reflection in 'the clear | Smooth lake'. Anthemmina believes that the promise given to Eve applies to her also:

What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself [...]

but follow me,

And I will bring thee where no shadow stays

Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he

Whose image thou art, him thou shall enjoy

Inseparably thine (*Paradise Lost*, IV.467-73).

Anthemmina mistakes the image as a prophecy of her own marriage, when it is in fact a revelation of her daughter's fate. In fact, Anthemmina fulfils Eve's doom; that is, to become a victim of her own interiority. Like Eve, Anthemmina is offered a treacherous guide which has none of the apparent trustworthiness of the cartographic representation. Phantasmion, on the other hand, sees beyond the image to the words forming on the 'sparkling sands in the bed of the river'. The sands form the names 'Dorimant and Anthemmina, Iarine and Phantasmion'. Phantasmion's attempts to decipher the words as they fade enable him to hear the disembodied 'tinkling melody' which confirms his reading of the image in the water (*Phantasmion*, p.119). The relationship between text and image here confirms that between Sara's

fairy tale and map: the map offers a guide towards the interpretation of the text, and a complete reading of *Phantasmion* benefits from scrutiny of both.

Reading the map alongside the text alters the implications of the narrative. The visualisations of the text which the map makes possible emphasise the ways in which Sara used her fairy tale to alter the Esteesian narrative. The plot of Sara's text is centred on Rockland, the reflection of Wasdale, the area around which STC's 1802 tour of the Lakes concentrated. STC referred to this tour as a 'circumcursion', a 'characteristically Coleridgean neologism' which, as Cooper and Gregory astutely observe, 'opens up the possibility of psycho-spatial analysis and interpenetrations based on notions of entrapment and boundedness'.<sup>151</sup> 'Circumcursion' is a precursor to the slightly later 'coarctation'; in both cases, STC implies a need to explore the boundaries of the entrapment that remain necessary to poetic creation. Cooper develops a similar idea when he writes that the notebook record of this tour

is a text which can be read as a phenomenological articulation of the enmeshed processes of pedestrian practice and on-the-spot environmental observation. Saliently, it is also an example of literary fieldwork in which Coleridge showcases his interest in the roles played by cartography in both the acquisition of geographical experience and the development of the spatial imagination. The Lake District notebook, therefore, is a processual space in which Coleridge thinks geographically through both text and a range of maps and mapping practices.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Cooper and Gregory, p.96.

<sup>152</sup> Cooper 'Critical Literary Cartography', p.33.



These notebook entries, so Cooper suggests, simultaneously map STC's progress through the landscape and his phenomenological development. His 'geographical experience' finds expression in the spatial poetics on display in the notebooks and in the publications which arose out of this tour (notably 'Dejection: An Ode'). Phantasmion's journeys perform a similar function. His routes' close correspondence to STC's chosen paths confirms the parallels in their purposes, a connection only clear when they are visualised using Sara's map (see Figure 3). I plotted Phantasmion's journeys onto a version of Sara's map which has been turned across its vertical axis, so that it becomes a mirror image of the original. Reversing the map highlighted the topographical similarities between this Fairyland and the Lake District. By overlaying a map of STC's 1802 tour onto the reversed *Phantasmion* map, I uncovered several similarities between these excursions:<sup>153</sup> Phantasmion and STC venture out to sea at similar points towards the southern limits of the region; they both visit the peninsula. But it is their mountain-climbing experiences which reveal that the refraction indicated by the map can also be found in the text's emotional events.

Phantasmion's third and longest route takes him from his palace in Palmland around the southern point of the Black Mountains via the border town of Lathra, and onward to the Black Lake. This journey echoes in reverse STC's travels between Beckfoot Bridge (6 August 1802) and Coniston (which he reached the next day).<sup>154</sup> The epiphany for both travellers occurs immediately prior to this stage in their journeys. On 5 August 1802 (a little more than four months before Sara's birth on 23

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<sup>153</sup> The map of STC's tour was taken from Cooper and Gregory, *Mapping the Lakes: A Literary GIS*: <<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/mappingthelakes>> [accessed 15 May 2013]. See also Cooper and Gregory, 'Mapping the English Lake District'.

<sup>154</sup> Cooper and Gregory, *Mapping the Lakes: A Literary GIS*.

December 1802), STC completed his infamous climb down the formidable Broad Stand. In 'A Letter to —', an early version of 'Dejection: An Ode', STC had meditated upon his relationship with his wife and, by extension, with his children:

My little children are a Joy, a Love,

A good Gift from above!

[...]

Those little Angel children (woe is me!)

There have been hours, when feeling how they bind

And pluck out the wing-feathers of my mind,

Turning my Error to Necessity,

I have half-wish'd, they never had been born (ll.272-82, *STCPW*, p.689.).

STC imagined his two sons and as-yet-unborn daughter to be the forces which keep him trapped on the side of an intellectual mountain; they 'bind' him, and 'pluck out the wing-feathers of [his] Mind' so that he can no longer imaginatively 'soar aloft', away from the ridge. He returned to this text on Broad Stand, which became the imaginative site of a wide-reaching Romantic interaction; STC suffered from a profound anxiety of influence from his young children, one which anticipated their anxieties as adults.

Figure 3 indicates that Phantasmion's journey covered similar ground to STC's, but the text indicates that Phantasmion's emotional conclusion in this episode is a refracted version of that which STC reached on Broad Stand. For Phantasmion's first journey he is equipped with butterfly wings 'of golden green adorned with black embroidery' (*Phantasmion*, p.12). Nature rejoices in his acceptance of Potentilla's gift.

As he flies above his kingdom, voices from the 'groves and flowery meads' celebrate Phantasmion as the newly-risen bardic figure:

See the bright stranger!

On wings of enchantment,

See how he soars!

Eagles! that high on the crest of the mountain,

Beyond where the cataracts gush from their fountain,

Look out o'er the sea and her glistening shores,

Cast your sun-gazing eyes on his pinions of light!

Behold how he glitters

Transcendantly bright!

Whither, ah whither,

To what lofty region

His course will he bend?

See him! O, see him! the clouds overtaking,

As tho' the green earth he were blithely forsaking;

Ah now, in swift circles behold him descend!

Now again like a meteor he shoots through the sky,

Or a star glancing upward,

To sparkle on high! (*Phantasmion*, p.13)

Phantasmion is recognised as an Esteesian poet. He is a 'bright stranger', borne up to some 'lofty region' on the correspondent breeze of Romantic imagination. He is to be

revered by his subjects below, including nature itself. Crucially, Phantasmion seems to forsake the 'green earth', a rejection of Wordsworthian nature in favour of a Coleridgean visionary poetics. The 'choral strain' suggests that Phantasmion is like a 'star glancing upward, | To sparkle on high'. The verb is carefully chosen: it recalls STC's poetic dejection. The stars STC beholds likewise sparkle when they are not 'bedimm'd' by passing clouds ('Dejection: An Ode', l.34, *STCPW*, l.2, p.699). Sara rejects this morbid creative vision, however. Phantasmion overtakes the clouds, and so his star – that is, his imaginative powers – can continue sparkling. The poem reinforces Phantasmion's rightful place as a poet; it recalls George Herbert's 'Easter Wings',<sup>155</sup> but this shape is, instead, Phantasmion's butterfly wings. The form of the poem acts as a reminder of the means by which he will reach the 'lofty region' of Romantic vision. Phantasmion's act of flight means that he can possess the landscape, much like the addressee of Wordsworth's 'To — on her first Ascent to the summit of Helvellyn' (published in the fifth edition of Wordsworth's *Guide*): 'Take thy flight; – possess, inherit | Alps or Andes – they are thine!'<sup>156</sup> The ability to 'survey' the landscape results in possession of it. Crucially, like Wordsworth's walking companion, Phantasmion does not 'possess' an original landscape; instead, he 'inherit[s]' one that has been well-documented by previous generations. Nevertheless, his personal responses to the landscape enable the discovery of a new space.

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<sup>155</sup> 'Easter Wings', *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.143-49. Sara admired the 'power and thought' of Herbert's poetry (*SCP*, p.233).

<sup>156</sup> *Guide to the Lakes*, ll.17-18, p.117).

The song encourages the eagles, the reincarnations of the High Romantics, to behold him from the 'crest of the mountain';<sup>157</sup> the 'wing-feathers of [their] mind[s]' are still intact, as will be proven by their aggressive response to the flying king. More specifically, they represent STC (and, perhaps, Wordsworth), 'lately taken wing'. It is by an eagle that Phantasmion is injured: he loses the use of one wing, and so is brought back to earth after his poetical flight. This is the text's literal *tessera*:<sup>158</sup> the young poet is disabled by a violent attack on his wings, and thus his poetry, as the shape of the song indicates. The attack renders him unable to 'soar aloft', just like his Esteesian precursor. Mimicking that precursor becomes impossible, and he must find a way to refract the Esteesian approach. Phantasmion returns to Potentilla to try a different tactic: if he is unable to maintain his status as a visionary poet in the air, he will become a poet of the ground.<sup>159</sup>

For his second journey, Phantasmion is equipped with feet 'like those of flies, which climb up the mirrors or walk over the roof of [his] marble hall' (*Phantasmion*, p.17). This modification allows him to walk up the 'precipice of solid rock, many hundred feet deep, which looked like a dark curtain let down from the sky' (p.18). The simile indicates Phantasmion's new status as the young poet of domesticity; if he cannot aim for the heavens, he will conquer the hearths. Phantasmion's ability to climb his own mirrors and walls indicates his new-found power over his palace, and, by an allegorical extension the advisers within it. Later, the ease with which he passes

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<sup>157</sup> Abrams suggests that the eagle was an 'emblem of the poise of human aspiration between impossibility and despair' (p.453).

<sup>158</sup> Bloom, *Map of Misreading*, p.84.

<sup>159</sup> Phantasmion, like Wordsworth, finds that he 'cannot take possession of the sky' (*Home at Grasmere*, l.199, p.55). Bloom suggests that Byron and Keats are, in different ways, poets who prefer to keep their feet on the ground. See *The Visionary Company*, pp.251-65 and p.393.

over the mountain border into Rockland anticipates the two countries' unification at the end of the tale. Phantasmion's second power allows him to clamber straight over the Mount of Eagles. This mountain is the 'crest' atop which the High Romantic eagles have established their nest, and it has an equivalent in the real Lake District. In his *Guide to the Lakes*, Wordsworth described a setting remarkably similar to the mountainous borderland between Palmland and Rockland:

The opening on the side of Ullswater Vale, down which this Stream flows, is adorned with fertile fields, cottages, and natural groves, that agreeably unite with the transverse views of the Lake; and the Stream, if followed up after the enclosures are left behind, will lead along bold water-breaks and water-falls to a silent Tarn in the recesses of Helvellyn. This desolate spot was formerly haunted by eagles, that built in the precipice which forms its western barrier. These birds used to wheel and hover round the head of the solitary angler. It also derives a melancholy interest from the fate of a young man, a stranger, who perished some years ago, by falling down the rocks in his attempt to cross over to Grasmere.<sup>160</sup>

It is important to note that the fifth edition of Wordsworth's *Guide* was published in 1835, just as Sara was beginning to work seriously on her fairy tale. The geographical details of Phantasmion's quest to the Mount of Eagles seem particularly indebted to Wordsworth's description of Ullswater Vale. The 'fertile fields' are recalled in the rich arable lands of Palmland, whilst the less hospitable 'transverse' side of the mountain finds its double in Rockland. The eagles' nest in *Phantasmion* is located in a precipice

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<sup>160</sup> *Guide to the Lakes*, p.17.

beside a similar tarn, at the bottom of which Phantasmion finds the original object of his quest, his mother's crown. Phantasmion's magical feet allow him successfully to negotiate the tricky path down the mountain in a way which recalls subversively the 'melancholy' fate of Wordsworth's 'young man'. Phantasmion, another 'stranger', succeeds because his relationship with the nature fairy Potentilla enables him to become at one with the natural world.

Phantasmion's negotiation of the mountain is fundamental for his affirmation of his right to rule. It is the obstacle which Phantasmion must overcome to uphold his right as king, and, implicitly, Sara's rightful place as a second-generation Romantic poet. Just as Sara's reputation depended upon the recovery of her father's poetic laurels (particularly after De Quincey's damaging articles throughout the latter half of 1834), Phantasmion's hopes rely upon the recovery of his late mother's jewelled wreath. When he reaches the summit Phantasmion sees an eagle flying away from its nest, from which he hears the cry of an infant. With the eagle absent, Phantasmion is able to go 'with steady foot' into the nest to rescue the child (*Phantasmion*, p.19). He carries the child down the other side of the mountain, and returns for Iarine. Phantasmion carries her back to the foot of the mountain and reunites her with her baby brother, Eurelio. Phantasmion is rewarded for this rescue: a 'beam of light' directs him to a tarn that had been covered with shadows. Phantasmion's prioritising of the baby's safety – and by extension of domestic values – enables him to recover his mother's 'gemmy coronal' (*Phantasmion*, p.23).

Phantasmion's path over the mountain mimics STC's straightforward route down Broad Stand, but the decisions he makes whilst completing the journey are a

refraction of his precursor's thoughts. Phantasmion seeks to forge his domestic ties in the equivalent locale to the place where STC rejected his young family. The baby Eurelio will become heir to the land Phantasmion inherited from his mother, Gemmaura, and Iarine will become his wife. The future of his kingdom is thus secured, and Palmland and Rockland united by the marriage. The eagle's absence is crucial; by only entering the eyrie after the poet-bird has left it, Phantasmion is able to complete his quest without injury from the strong poet-eagle. In other words, he swerves around the eagle; he comes into contact with its legacy, but is able to complete his quest by diverting away from it.

For Sara, too, this swerve is essential. Sara uses the map to visualise an imaginative space which is a refraction of her forebears' poetic landscapes. By describing a move away from her father's emotional decisions, Sara imagines an alternative for the Esteesian poetic figure and, by extension, for second-generation Coleridgean poets. The map reinforces this move away from this existing tradition, and affirms Sara's status as an independent poet. Sara's reconstruction of the Lake District as an independent Fairyland indicates a poetic autonomy that has been largely overlooked. In turning away from her father's world without hope, Sara created a Fairyland in which her own creative power might be embodied.

Hartley's Fairyland was rather different. Ejuxria was a microscopic version of the real world. It was not a swerve away from Hartley's precursors; instead, it was an escapist fantasy that allowed Hartley to rewrite his position in the social world.



#### IV. A 'ruined fragment of a worn-out world': Hartley and Ejuxria

Ejuxria was an important means through which Hartley's early interactive poetics were expressed. Keanie suggests that Ejuxria was simultaneously enabled by and made necessary because of Hartley's relationship to STC,<sup>161</sup> but Healey's assertion that Derwent was more important to Hartley's 'poetics of relationship' seems more apt in this case.<sup>162</sup> Although Ejuxria may have provided Hartley with a 'mental recess' to which he could 'retreat' from the 'light that reflected right at him off the Alps of his father's imagination',<sup>163</sup> it was primarily with Derwent that Hartley shared the 'letters and papers from Ejuxria', and to Derwent and their school friends that he told Ejuxrian stories late into the night (*HCP*, I, p.xlv). However, Derwent did recall that one of the 'serial' stories featured 'a subtle, intellectual villain, Scauzan, and his father, a man of gigantic stature, outlawed and persecuted through the machinations of his son' (*HCP*, I, p.lix). As Lefebure notes, 'guilt heavily shadowed the labyrinthine landscape of Hartley's subconscious mind'.<sup>164</sup> The map, too, indicates that Hartley's perceptions of his poetic relationships coloured Ejuxria. Yet very little evidence about this imaginary kingdom survives. In fact, the very record of Ejuxria is proof of a working 'poetics of relationship': it was only via Derwent that anything from Ejuxria was put into the public domain. His 'Memoir' and 'The Ghost in the Woods' dramatic fragment are the earliest printed references to Hartley's fantasy realm, and it was from the 'Memoir' that the late nineteenth-century fascination with Ejuxria arose. Hartley became a cautionary tale against allowing children to indulge excessively in

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<sup>161</sup> Keanie, p.43.

<sup>162</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, pp.90-100.

<sup>163</sup> Keanie, p.42.

<sup>164</sup> Lefebure, *Bondage of Love*, p.210.

fantasies.<sup>165</sup> According to Shuttleworth, Derwent offered his brother up as a lesson in the dangers of the imagination.<sup>166</sup>

In the 'Memoir' prefaced to the 1851 edition of Hartley's *Poems*, Derwent describes how Ejuxria came into being at 'a very early period' of Hartley's childhood (*HCP*, I, p.xli). Shuttleworth lays the blame squarely at the door of Hartley's parents for his failure to develop in the way his family and friends would have liked: he was, she writes, 'indulged by his parents in his imaginative passion for creating alternate lands', with the result that he 'had been trapped forever in an unhealthy childhood, hindered from making the necessary progression into adulthood'.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, if Derwent's suspicions were correct, Hartley added to the Ejuxrian myth throughout his life. Initially, Hartley imagined a time when a 'small cataract' would burst out of a field near to Greta Hall. Hartley named this emergence Jug-force, after the jugs which littered the landscape under the smaller becks – or forces – to collect water for household tasks. Jug-force became Jugforcia, a name subsequently disguised, via the type of linguistic play that characterised the Coleridge-Fricker-Southey household, 'under the less familiar appellation of Ejuxria' (*HCP*, I, p.xlii). Initially, Ejuxria was contained within a 'spot of waste ground' that was appropriated for Hartley's use (*HCP*, I, p.xlvii). This area was an early indication of Hartley's 'Shandean'

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<sup>165</sup> An article in the *Edinburgh Review*, attributed to Aubrey de Vere, asserted that 'it is not a predominance of intellect, but a deficiency of will, which banishes us from the world of reality, and converts into a gilded prison the palace-halls of the imagination' ('Review of *Poems by Hartley Coleridge. With a Memoir of his Life. By his Brother. And Essays and Marginalia* by Hartley Coleridge', *Edinburgh Review*, 94 (1851), pp.64-97; p.71 (quoted in Shuttleworth, p.45).

<sup>166</sup> Crichton Browne, in his essay 'Psychical Diseases of Early Life' (1860), drew on the 'Memoir' to establish Hartley as 'a definitive case study for nineteenth-century psychiatry, demonstrating the alarming consequences of indulging in unbridled imaginative life during childhood' (Shuttleworth, p.76).

<sup>167</sup> Shuttleworth, p.86.

temperament;<sup>168</sup> in a way highly reminiscent of Uncle Toby, Hartley used it to play out Ejuxrian scenes, particularly battles. Derwent recalled how Hartley had nursed an ambition to train local cats and rats to play the parts of the soldiers (*HCP*, I, p.xlvii). The scheme was never realised, but Hartley did have a companion in a local boy – the Sancho Panza to Hartley’s Don Quixote, as Lefebure romantically describes it – and Hartley’s monologues on Ejuxria exerted a great pull on his listeners.<sup>169</sup>

After Hartley’s death, Anna Montagu wrote to Derwent and recalled the captivating accounts of the ‘Ejuxrii’:

[h]e was a most extraordinary child exhibiting at six years old the most surprising talent for invention. At eight years of age he had found a spot upon the globe which he peopled with an imaginary nation, gave them a name, a language, laws, and a senate; where he framed speeches, which he *translated*, as he said, for my benefit, and for the benefit of my neighbours, who climbed the garden-wall to listen to this surprising child, whom they supposed to be reciting pieces from memory [...]. He called this nation the “Ejuxrii;” and one day, when walking very pensively, I asked him what ailed him. He said, “My people are too fond of war, and I have just made an eloquent speech in the Senate, which has not made any impression on them, and to war they will go” (4 April 1849, quoted in *HCP*, I, pp.xxxviii-xxxix, original emphasis ).

There is a clear fluidity here between Hartley’s perception of reality and his fantasy; Derwent wrote that Hartley ‘craved reality’ but was ‘hardly [...] conscious of a difference between fact and fiction’ (*HCP*, I, p.xxxiv). In short, Derwent implies,

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<sup>168</sup> Letter: Hartley to Derwent, 12 April 1845, in *HCL*, p.278.

<sup>169</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.236.

Ejuxria was a kind of reality for Hartley. It seems that Hartley lived in what Josef Breuer would later call a 'private theatre' in which he spent his time 'living through fairy tales in [his] imagination'.<sup>170</sup> The boundary between fact and fiction was a porous one in both directions; Ejuxria certainly bled into Hartley's everyday conversations, but it was itself heavily influenced by Hartley's increasing knowledge of the real world. Lefebure notes how the war tactics in Ejuxria became more elaborate as Hartley's fascination with Wellington, Napoleon and the politics of the British war effort increased.<sup>171</sup> Derwent recalled the changes to the imaginary 'continent' following Hartley's first trip to London in 1807. He was introduced to chemistry by Davy, taken to see a play at Covent Garden and to the Tower of London with Scott and Wordsworth (years later, it still rankled that Wordsworth was too penurious to let them go and see the crown jewels).<sup>172</sup>

Derwent recalled that the effect of these experiences was 'immediately apparent in the complexion of those extraordinary day-dreams in which he spent his visionary boyhood' (*HCP*, I, p.xl). They were internalised and transformed into the stuff of Hartley's fantasy realm as if, in Wordsworth's words, 'his whole vocation | Were endless imitation' ('Ode: Intimations of Immortality', ll.107-08, *PWW*, IV, p.282). Derwent's preposition is telling: Hartley spent his days 'in' Ejuxria, phenomenologically separated from the real world. As Healey has demonstrated, Derwent was an important perpetrator of the myth of Hartley as a 'visionary' being,<sup>173</sup> and the prolonged description of Ejuxria confirms Hartley as an

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<sup>170</sup> Breuer and Freud, p.22.

<sup>171</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.244.

<sup>172</sup> Lefebure, *Bondage of Love*, p.181 and *Private Lives*, p.244.

<sup>173</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.97.

otherworldly 'faery voyager'. As I explored in Chapter 2, Hartley, too, portrayed himself as being a 'weak' creative force (see pp.136-43); his own lack of originality is a constant refrain throughout his poetry and prose. Even the epigraph to his *Poems* (1833) emphasised his derivativeness. It is a misquotation from Michael Drayton's poem 'Matilda to King John':

I write, endite [*sic*], I point, I raze, I quote,

I interline, I blot, correct, I note,

I make, allege, I imitate, I feign.<sup>174</sup>

Hartley removes the line in which the speaker describes their conflicting emotions ('I hope, despaire, take courage, faint, disdaine'), thereby removing the only autonomous act described in Matilda's torturous letter-writing.<sup>175</sup> The result is an epigraph that indicates that the reader should expect nothing original from the volume. Hartley allowed that he was talented at creating 'great circumstantiality of description' but affirmed Wordsworth's suspicions about his 'vocation' when he wrote that: 'I was a great story-teller, but my stories were never original. Whatever I heard or read, I worked up into a tale of my own, in which there was no invention of incident' ('Books of My Childhood', *E&M*, I, p.346). Even if this self-deprecating assessment is true, the map of Ejuxria reveals a substantial capacity for original thought. When it outgrew the 'spot of waste land', it became a 'visionary' realm; it is this kingdom that Hartley maps.

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<sup>174</sup> 1833, epigraph.

<sup>175</sup> Michael Drayton, 'Matilda to King John', l.37, in *The Works of Michael Drayton, Esq., A Celebrated Poet in the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth, King James I. and Charles I.* (London: W. Reeve, 1753), p.236.

Ejuxria quickly ‘overflowed [...] the narrow spot in which it was originally generated’ (*HCP*, I, p.xlii). Derwent records that it became ‘an island continent, with its own attendant isles’. He suggests that Ejuxria resembled ‘a new Australia, or newest Sea land, – if it were not rather a reflection of the old Europe projected from the clouds on some wide ocean somewhere’ (*HCP*, I, p.xli-ii). If what Derwent described was true, then Hartley’s mirror was situated in a different position to Sara’s; it is in the position of the Wordsworthian ‘stream as clear as sky’, a mid-point between earth and the heavens. Hartley’s mirror is a mimetic one: at first, Derwent describes how the reflection is received, passively, ‘from the clouds’ and later how ‘[t]he scenery at [Hartley’s] feet he beheld mirrored in a floating cloud’ (*HCP*, I, p.xl). The shifting clouds represent Hartley’s reflective imagination, and according to Derwent they seemed to become ‘more real and important than the matter-of-fact world in which he had to live’ (*HCP*, I, pp.xl-xli). The clouds act as an appropriate metaphor for Hartley as he is represented here: the transcendent faery voyager, ‘floating on a stream as clear as sky’ (‘To H.C. Six Years Old’, l.9, *PWW*, I, p.247), finds his natural double in the ‘floating cloud’. The cloud occupies a liminal position between reality and fantasy; it is neither part of the earth nor completely separate from it. Furthermore, the cloud, like Ejuxria, relies upon elements from the real world for its creation.

In short, Ejuxria existed in two forms: a concrete place based upon real-world places and situated on a ‘spot of waste ground’ appropriated for Hartley’s use; or an abstract space that could only be reached by an enormous bird (which Lefebure believes to be a descendent of the Esteesian albatross but Derwent thought was

derived from the *Arabian Nights*).<sup>176</sup> In either case, it as an 'islander' fantasy, delimited either by the edge of the 'spot of waste ground' or by the waters which were imagined to cut it off from the rest of the world. The Ejuxria Derwent describes is based upon traditional utopic visions of isolation and containment. The map tells a different story (Figure 4).

Judith Plotz believes that the map was drawn some time between 1804 and 1810, but she notes that some scholars believe that it is the same as that mentioned by Wordsworth in his Immortality Ode:<sup>177</sup>

Behold the child among his new-born blisses,

A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!

[...]

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,

Some fragment from his dream of human life,

Shaped by him with newly-learnèd art (ll.86-93, *PWW*, IV, p.282).

Unlike Sara's Fairyland, Ejuxria was not explicitly based on any one geographical area. Instead, the map reveals a composite of various counties across the North of England, re-orientated and re-situated to create a new landscape. A comparison of Hartley's map with John Cary's *New and Correct English Atlas* (1793) and the later *New Map of the British Isles* (1807) reveals much about Hartley's inspiration for the basic outlines of the seven regions of which Ejuxria is comprised.<sup>178</sup> Cary's maps are

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<sup>176</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.236; *HCP*, p.xliv.

<sup>177</sup> Plotz, 'Adolf and Annette', p.153.

<sup>178</sup> John Cary, *New and Correct English Atlas: Being A New Set of County Maps from Actual Surveys* (London: John Cary, 1793) and *New Map of the British Isles from the Latest Authorities* (London: John Cary, 1807).

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**REASONS**

**Figure 4: Hartley's map of Ejuxria. Reproduced with permission of Priscilla Cassam and the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.**



for Hartley the 'kernel[s] of geographical or topographical fact' which, according to Skelton, 'places limits on the freedom or fantasy' of every map's maker.<sup>179</sup> That is not to say that Hartley mimicked these maps, however; Lefebvre's assertion that 'a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences' is proved true of Ejuxria.<sup>180</sup>

Nevertheless, Cary's maps were hugely influential; F.P. Sprent regards him as being the founder of modern cartography, and by the early nineteenth century Cary's *New Atlas* had become a standard reference work. Sprent notes that Cary's maps were marked by excellent workmanship and a high standard of accuracy far in advance of eighteenth-century maps.<sup>181</sup> Cary's *New and Correct English Atlas* purported to show 'the Connexion of one Map with another';<sup>182</sup> his atlases were the earliest road maps of Britain, and Cary went to great pains to indicate how his maps could show transportation links between counties. STC found in this type of map a useful metaphor for considering the relationship between the vast reaches of the human mind and the specific thoughts or images it could create. In a note to *Aids to Reflection*, STC recalls Hartley's cartographic practices to illustrate the origin of the word 'aphorism':

Aphorism, determinate position, from the Greek, ap, from; and horizein, to bound or limit; whence our horizon. – In order to get the full sense of a word, we should first present to our minds the visual image that forms its primary

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<sup>179</sup> Skelton, p.4.

<sup>180</sup> Lefebvre, p.52.

<sup>181</sup> F.P. Sprent, 'Introduction', Thomas Chubb, *The Printed Maps in the Atlases of Great Britain and Ireland: A bibliography, 1579-1870* (London: The Homeland Association, 1927), pp.ix-xvii; p.xvi.

<sup>182</sup> Cary, *New and Correct English Atlas*, title page.

meaning. Draw lines of different colours round the different counties of England, and then cut out each separately, as in the common play-maps that children take to pieces and put together – so that each district can be contemplated apart from the rest, as a whole in itself. This twofold act of circumscribing, and detaching, when it is exerted by the mind on subjects of reflection and reason, is to *aphorize*, and the result an *aphorism*.<sup>183</sup>

The aphorism is an agoraphobic form; it relies for its pithy identity on its coarctated boundaries. For STC, this kind of agoraphobic creativity is ideally expressed in the map game that emphasises England's provinciality. The carefully drawn boundaries on Hartley's map act to demarcate separate areas of Ejuxria, but the focus of the map as a whole indicates a unity between these regions. In STC's terms, the act of drawing the boundaries within Ejuxria is reflective; Hartley does not simply imitate a pre-drawn landscape, but considers the political, social and topographical relationships between them.

The borders of these realms provide a clue as to the inspiration for each realm: 'Maza proper' resembles Westmoreland and, as on Cary's 1807 map, is outlined in yellow; Inla Ejuxria appears to be a rotated version of Lancashire (Morecambe Bay becomes the estuary of the Amor River), and is outlined in pink like Lancashire on both Cary's maps; Sharacoo bears a close resemblance in shape to Cheshire, and is similarly demarcated by a green line; Mohamatanbantis appears to find its double in Lincolnshire, and is likewise outlined in blue. The Middle Eastern-inspired name is appropriate for the reimagining of the eastern county. The map of Ejuxria recalls the

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<sup>183</sup> *AtR*, pp.32-33n.

map game Southey bought Hartley when STC left for Malta; both maps highlight the importance of each region's autonomous identity.

Some details remembered by Derwent find their way, in a fashion, onto the map, although Maza is the only place whose name was not altered. Derwent described what he terms the 'analagon to England' as being the Crete-like island of Port Pomandra, which lay to the North West against Flametia. However, there are no islands outside of the main landmass. The closest name to Port Pomandra is Pantamonta in the mid-west of Mohametanbantis. Loco was the Flametian capital, and seems to be located, with the slightly revised name of Luco, in the north east corner of the map. However, it doesn't seem to be a place of any special significance. Rozanor, further to the west of Inla Ejuxria, seems to be of far more significance. It appears twice on the map, perhaps evidence of the map's evolution and suggestive of the ways in which Ejuxria was altered over time. The northernmost Rozanor is labelled with especially large writing, which seems to suggest its importance. As Delano-Smith and Kain observe, on maps 'text can also be arranged to indicate spatial characteristics',<sup>184</sup> a practice Hartley repeats in several locations. In two of the regions (Sharacoo and Mohamatanbantis), the principal cities seem to be indicated by being written out in large capital letters. The final town that Derwent names, Crucau, may perhaps be found in Crokaé near to Pantamonta.

Derwent recorded that it 'did not occur to [Hartley] at first that the names of personas and places ought in every case to be original; and when this was pointed out to him, he altered the spelling and pronunciation so as to remove the objection' (*HCP*,

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<sup>184</sup> Delano-Smith and Kain, p.2.

p.xliv). In a similar way to Sarah Fricker Coleridge's *Lingo Grande*, Hartley began with existing words and mutated them. These linguistic transitions provided a way in which Hartley could switch easily between the real world and Ejuxria. As Peter Mitchell writes, '[p]oetic language, particularly metaphor, allows for a kind of border-crossing that exposes disciplinary and linguistic striations even as it traverses them'.<sup>185</sup> The place names in Ejuxria, as Derwent noted, bore a close resemblance to real places and names, just as the topography of Ejuxria was modelled on the northern counties in which Hartley spent the majority of his life. The imagined landscape of Ejuxria, as it is revealed by the map, indicates the kind of 'border-crossing' available in Ejuxria. The boundaries around Hartley's imaginary region suggest the nature of his poetic relationships to his precursors. At the same time, they assert Hartley's continued control over this 'spot of waste ground'.

Ejuxria, more so than Sara's map of *Phantasmion*, mimics the enclave status of the Lake District in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Sara's map was drawn when the Lakes had started to become a major tourist destination, but when Hartley completed his it was largely still a cloistered landscape. The topography of the region was a major cause for its isolation; the mountains which made it such a distinctive location also prevented travellers from accessing it easily. It was this boundedness that so appealed to Wordsworth; as Ernest de Sélincourt long ago observed, '[o]f the mountains [Wordsworth] can rarely speak except in the figured

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<sup>185</sup> Peter Mitchell, "'The stratified record upon which we set our feet': The spatial turn and the multilayering of history, geography, and geology", in *Geohumanities*, pp.71-83; pp.76-77.

language of vitalizing love'.<sup>186</sup> In 'Home at Grasmere', Wordsworth appealed to the mountains around his home to entrap him within his creative haven:

Embrace me then, ye Hills, and close me in;

Now in the clear and open day I feel

Your guardianship; I take it to my heart (*Home at Grasmere*, ll.110-12, p.45).

Wordsworth seeks what Cooper terms a 'double boundedness or dual insideness'; he finds in Grasmere 'an inner chamber in the circumscribed space of the English Lakes'.<sup>187</sup> The mountains protect the imaginative and actual landscape Wordsworth holds dear, and he, in turn, absorbs his poetic feeling from them. Wordsworth imagines a cycle of internalisation, whereby he takes in something from the mountains which keep him enclosed. The mountains are an important feature in Wordsworth's proto-Heideggerian sense of dwelling:

Mountainous countries, more frequently and forcibly than others, remind us of the power of the elements, as manifested in winds, snows, and torrents, and accordingly make the notion of exposure very unpleasing; while shelter and comfort are in proportion necessary and acceptable.<sup>188</sup>

The mountains' inhospitableness conversely reminds the poet of the need for a safe dwelling place. On a regional scale, the mountains enclose the Lakes, but they also create a need for 'shelter and comfort'. To live in the Lakes is, by necessity, to reside in a highly bounded, but nonetheless comforting and homely, space. Wordsworth's poetry demonstrates ways in which attitudes towards mountains had radically

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<sup>186</sup> Ernest de Sélincourt, 'Introduction', in *Guide to the Lakes*, p.xxii.

<sup>187</sup> Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space', p.814.

<sup>188</sup> *Guide to the Lakes*, p.76.

altered in the previous two centuries, and it is a change reflected, too, on Hartley's map.<sup>189</sup>

As in 'Home at Grasmere', the map of Ejuxria invokes the mountains as a protective force: they guard the Western edge of Ejuxria from unwanted incursions. However, Hartley's relationship to mountains was not so straightforward, and this mountain chain also serves to trap Hartley in Ejuxria – just as, later in life, 'poor Hartley' would be 'excluded from the family circle' and effectively banished to the Lake District to live out a life under the custodianship of his mother and the eye of the Wordsworths.<sup>190</sup> The mountains on Hartley's map are protective, like Wordsworth's, but they are oppressive too. They perform an important imaginative function: they distinguish Hartley's Ejuxrian version of the Lake District from Wordsworth's. The border to the South remains open; it is a political border marked only by the lines on the map. In fact, interaction between the southern edge of Ejuxria and the land beyond it might be encouraged. The River Amor flows from this unknown land into Ejuxria, and its homophonic relationship to the French 'amour' suggests that a poetics of relationship is at play here. Yet mountains enclose Ejuxria to the West. Just as in *Phantasmion* the Black Mountains prevent interaction between Palmland and Rockland, so too do these mountains isolate Ejuxria from the rest of the continent. The mountains act to close down interaction, and respond in an agoraphobic way to the potential for engagement with the social spaces on the other side.

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<sup>189</sup> For an engaging history of British perceptions of mountains between c.1600 and c.1800, see Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1959; repr. 1997).

<sup>190</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.19.

Cooper recognises that mountains act as protective limits in Wordsworth's poetry,<sup>191</sup> but they are also important sites of prophecy: M.H. Abrams points out that mountains have been associated with the godly since Moses stood on Mount Sinai.<sup>192</sup> According to Simon Bainbridge, in *The Prelude* mountains represent 'insight' rather than 'farsight',<sup>193</sup> and that seems to be their function on Hartley's map, too. They indicate that Ejuxria was an enclosed space, one in which Hartley can practice an agoraphobic poetics that allowed him to express his individuality in a protected way. As Hartley grew up, they became reminders of the carefree days of his childhood, metonyms for the fantasy realm in which he had spent so many of his 'visionary days'. In the fairy tale fragment 'Adolf & Annette', the mountain is Paradise; it is a place of childish innocence that is corrupted when the siblings begin to desire the possession of objects. They stumble into a valley, and find that they cannot return back up the mountainside.<sup>194</sup> Mountains remained a constant feature in Hartley's poetics, and the Ejuxrian mountains anticipated a conflicted response to them: they simultaneously acted as his guardians and his jailers.

Even before Hartley moved to the Lake District as a child, he was imagined to have a special imaginative connection to its mountains. In the first published version of 'Frost at Midnight', STC imagines a creative conversation between his child and the Lake District mountains:

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<sup>191</sup> Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space', pp.813-16.

<sup>192</sup> Abrams, p.286.

<sup>193</sup> Simon Bainbridge, 'Romantic Writers and Mountaineering', *Romanticism*, 18.1 (2012), pp.1-15; p.7.

<sup>194</sup> Plotz, 'Adolf and Annette', pp.151-61. Plotz suggests that the story may be a 'partial response' to *Phantasmion* (p.151).

Like those, my babe! which, ere to-morrow's warmth  
Have capp'd their sharp keen points with pendulous drops,  
Will catch thine eye, and with their novelty  
Suspend thy little soul; then make thee shout,  
And stretch and flutter from thy mother's arms  
As thou would'st fly for very eagerness (ll.74-79, *STCPW*, II.1, p.572).

STC imagines an infant form of poetic creation, whereby the baby sees the mountains and 'shout[s]', transforming the natural world into an early poetic utterance. STC imagines Hartley inheriting the 'joy' he found in mountains,<sup>195</sup> and for a time his prophecy seemed to have been fulfilled. Shortly after the move to Greta Hall, STC proudly recorded a conversation with Hartley in his notebooks, in which the child seemed already to be experiencing the complex phenomenological responses to landscape STC was himself undergoing:<sup>196</sup>

March 17, 1801. Tuesday – Hartley looking out of my study window fixed his eyes steadily and for some time on the opposite prospect, & then said – Will yon Mountains *always* be? – I shewed him the whole magnificent Prospect in a Looking Glass, and held it up, so that the whole was like a Canopy or Ceiling over his head, & he struggled to express himself concerning the Difference between the Thing & the Image almost with convulsive effort. – I ~~think~~ never before saw such an Abstract of *Thinking* as a pure act & energy, of *Thinking* as distinguished from *Thoughts* (*CN*, I.923).

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<sup>195</sup> Bainbridge, p.11.

<sup>196</sup> He wrote to Francis Wrangham that he could 'seldom shave without cutting' himself because he got so distracted by the mountains, mists or 'some slanting Column of misty sunlight [...] sailing cross me' (Letter: STC to Francis Wrangham, 23 December 1800, in *CL*, I, p.658).



Lefebure suggests that there is ‘a powerful claustrophobic strain’ in this episode which would ‘find subsequent reflection in Hartley’s adult responses to the Lakeland scenery’.<sup>197</sup> In fact, this scene is agoraphobic: it is an early moment that reveals Hartley’s productive responses to enclosure. The ‘Image’ of the mountains continued to dominate Hartley’s imagination, becoming a pervasive metaphor for his feelings of entrapment and regret.

Nowhere are mountains more threatening to a sense of self than in Hartley’s fragmentary poem ‘Prometheus’. Although Hartley started work on ‘Prometheus’ in the early 1820s, he continued to work on it intermittently throughout his life. Following STC’s death, it was one of the projects Hartley promised to complete in his memory. Like Shelley, Hartley turns away from Aeschylus’s play,<sup>198</sup> instead engaging with an Esteesian focus on the hero as ‘the profound Emblem of the Great Tragic Poet’, who remains ‘powerless’ and ‘fixed on a barren Rock’.<sup>199</sup> Hartley’s Prometheus is defined by his complete lack of motion:

Hark! did he stir? Oh, no, he cannot! – fast,  
 Fast as a frozen sea, quite motionless!  
 Though every sinew stares as he were bent  
 To unfix the mountain from its rooted base,  
 And overwhelm us with the ruins! (‘Prometheus’, ll.50-54, *BWM*, p.41)

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<sup>197</sup> Lefebure, *Private Lives*, p.173.

<sup>198</sup> Chris Murray summarises Hartley’s approach to the Prometheus myth thus: ‘Like his father, Hartley Coleridge avoids the tragic essence of Aeschylus’ play and focuses elsewhere. Like Shelley, Hartley invents new material to accomplish his purpose rather than relying solely on passages he has found in Aeschylus. The world that Hartley Coleridge depicts is a solipsistic one, whose occupants are incapable of tragic sympathy’ (*Tragic Coleridge* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p.159).

<sup>199</sup> *AtR*, p.402.

The nymphs who promise to rescue him describe Prometheus's dual entrapment: he is tied up, but encased also by the mountains which surround the site of his punishment (and which evoke another mythological punishment: Sisyphus's). Prometheus's situation is a subversion of Wordsworth's; whereas Wordsworth finds creative encouragement in his 'double boundedness', Prometheus's gaze seems to attempt to bring the mountains down. According to Leadbetter, the Prometheus myth expresses the 'agon of the transnatural, in which to become godlike is to transgress sacred law, become daemonic'.<sup>200</sup> Hartley's Prometheus aims for such a deification, one which will allow him to break free of his punishment. As we saw with his sonnet 'Eden' in Chapter 2 (see pp.132-33), though, the irony is that were Prometheus to be freed he would lose the defining element of his identity.

Later still, Hartley re-evaluated his perception of the Lake District mountains. He reflected on the way they seemed to encapsulate several periods of his life all at once. In a note accompanying a sonnet sent to Mrs. Charles Fox in April 1842, Hartley reflected on the permanence of the mountains and the changeability of his own state:

The mountains stand where they did and I suppose that the lights and shadows repeat themselves after their old fashion but they are not the same mountains to me as they were when you had your little boat on Grasmere Lake – and could laugh at my awkwardness in handling the oars. They are grown old like myself. When a boy I thought a mountain was nothing but to be climbed – Snow was to make snowballs of – Ice for me to slide on. In riper youth I thought of them as Powers in all their beauty and all their ruggedness

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<sup>200</sup> Leadbetter, p.91.

witnessing and authorizing a kindred power in myself An [*sic*] imagination, that as it enabled me to make one beauty of all the uncountable beauties great and small – that were asserting themselves around me, combining the Celandine at my feet, with the shelving crag above me, might enable me not to create – for that is a word not applicable to any effluence of the human mind – but to generate a correspondent world – in which the images derived from outer things should be not causes but emblems of the things within – and Love itself – a sacrament of that love divine which merges itself in its object. Now the mountains are to me but mighty monuments of what has been – and what might have been and might be yet had I living objects I love near enough – but no matter (9 April 1842, quoted in *HNP*, p.33n).

The mountains simultaneously remind Hartley of the strong sense of belonging he experienced in childhood and remind him of his exclusion from it. In other words, the mountains have become distinctly uncanny: they trap him in an exaggerated sense of ‘dwelling’ which conversely results in feelings of homelessness.<sup>201</sup> Yet, they also create a Bachelardian nook which is creatively enabling precisely because it is both incarcerating and liberating.<sup>202</sup> Hartley sees the state of his life reflected back to him in the Lake District topography. He recalls his childhood, when he thought that to climb a mountain and to slide back down again ‘the finest sport in the world’.<sup>203</sup> Marlon B. Ross and Simon Bainbridge both describe the creative power experienced by Romantic poets in the act of mountain-climbing, but what Hartley records is a loss

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<sup>201</sup> For Heidegger’s definition of ‘dwelling’, see ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’.

<sup>202</sup> Bachelard, p.8 and p.46.

<sup>203</sup> Letter: Sarah to Mrs. George Coleridge, 1 September 1804, quoted in *Bondage of Love*, p.165.

of this power.<sup>204</sup> He recalls the time when these mountains seemed to develop a 'kindred power' in him that allowed him to access a similar fount of creativity to Wordsworth or STC. Hartley explains how he had found external objects to be in correspondence with the 'things within'; he remembers an intense period of interaction between himself, the external world and his community. It was these interactions which enabled the generation, God-like, of a 'correspondent world': Ejuxria. Now, however, the mountains are become nothing more than 'mighty monuments'; they record a previous interaction but are no longer able to facilitate new connections.

When the mountains are no longer there to be climbed, they seem to confirm a loss of poetic identity. They remind Hartley of his lonely exile in the Lake District, far away from the rest of his family and so removed from the relationships necessary to his poetics. In the sonnet which accompanied this letter, Hartley expands upon his sense of disconnection with the poetic world:

Now every flower by vernal poets sung,  
And every bird the pushing woods among,  
And all the many-dappled banks and braes,  
Recall remembrance of immortal lays,

But speak to me in a forgotten tongue ('To Mrs. Charles Fox', ll.4-8, *HNP*, p.33).

The 'outer things' which had once seemed to interact so productively with Hartley's imagination now seem to converse in a strange language; the linguistic barrier Hartley constructed with Ejuxria seems, 'now', to be turned against him. They remind

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<sup>204</sup> See Marlon B. Ross, 'Romantic Quest and Conquest: Troping Masculine Power in the Crisis of Poetic Identity', in *Romanticism and Feminism*, pp.26-51, and Bainbridge.

him of a poetics from which he feels excluded. The mountains which, on Hartley's map, had protected his imaginative space now seem to be the very objects which prevent him from returning to it.

Hartley's map of Ejuxria, like Sara's of *Phantasmion*, indicates that his poetics depended upon interaction with his precursors within carefully controlled borders. Like Sara, he found inspiration in his 'native vale', but, like Sara too, found it necessary to transform that landscape into something which reflected a personal poetic topography. The last generation of the Coleridge family who I want to consider displayed their agoraphobic poetics in a similar way. Their manuscripts, like Hartley's and Sara's maps, constructed and amended the material boundaries of the page, as well as the formal constraints of their poems, to articulate unique poetic perspectives that continued to interact with the family tradition.

## Chapter 4: The 'pale and imitative age': Derwent Moultrie, Edith and Ernest Hartley Coleridge

In his essay 'Pins', Hartley draws attention to the readability of inanimate objects. He extends the parameters of STC's 'one Life' ('The Eolian Harp', l.27, *STCPW*, l.1, p.233) to include inorganic and man-made things:

How seldom are we aware, that every atom of the universe is a text, and every article of our household an homily? [...] Yet there is not a pin in a tailor's arm, not one that contributes to the annual groat of a miser, but might teach the wise of the world a lesson. Let us divide it into matter and form, and we shall perceive that it is the form alone that constitutes it a pin. Time was when it slumbered in the chaos of brazen wire, amid the multitude of concentric circles, cycles, and epicycles. Time was, too, when that wire was molten in the furnace, when the solid brass became as water, and rushed from its ore with a glowing rapidity. When this took place we know not; what strange mutations the metals may have undergone we cannot conjecture. It may have shone on the breast of Achilles, or ejected the spirit of Hector. Who knows but it may have partaken of the sacredness of Solomon's lovers, or have gleamed destruction in the mirror of Archimedes? ('Pins', *E&M*, I, pp.80-81)

Hartley imagines that the pin's heroic past remains a part of its identity, concealed in its new shape but nevertheless still pertinent. He suggests an interconnection between an object's form and its 'poor passive matter' that links the object, and by extension its user, to an unknown past. In this final chapter, I want to turn to the

writings of the lesser-known, and understudied, Coleridges: Derwent's sons Derwent Moultrie (1828-1880) and Ernest (1846-1920), and Sara's daughter Edith (1832-1911). I will suggest how these writers' works explore a similar relationship between matter and form which, as Hartley's essay advocates, foregrounds interactions between past and present.

The readings suggested here owe much to Susan Wolfson's focus on the page as a 'specific site' of 'complex interaction'.<sup>1</sup> By drawing attention to their material poetics,<sup>2</sup> I want to demonstrate how Derwent Moultrie, Edith and Ernest's works continue to engage with the family's interactive poetics as revealed in STC's, Hartley's and Sara's works. Moreover, I point to the ways in which this sense of community continues to be considered through an agoraphobic poetics as well. As I discussed in Chapter 1 (see p.35), Trotter demonstrates that the 'last three decades of the nineteenth century were phobia's *belle époque*'; the term came into popular use in the 1870s, and by 1892 Freud was beginning to recognise agoraphobic symptoms in his patients.<sup>3</sup> For the majority of these writers' lives, then, spatial anxieties were recognised as an important influence on individuals' perceptions of the world around them. In these poets' works, the page replaces the world as the site of anxiety, yet it is also the page which provides the means for overcoming that anxiety.<sup>4</sup> In the works on which I focus here, agoraphobia is articulated through form and matter, and in particular through a foregrounding of paratextual elements. As we shall see,

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfson, p.8.

<sup>2</sup> Kristen Kreider, "'Scrap," "Flap," "Strip," "Stain," "Cut": The Material Poetics of Emily Dickinson's Later Manuscript Pages', *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, 19.2 (2010), pp.67-103; p.67.

<sup>3</sup> Freud begins to use the term in the early 1890s; see Breuer and Freud, p.112n.

<sup>4</sup> For an account of how a Bloomian anxiety of influence might be turned towards ideas of the book, see Andrew M. Stauffer, 'Childe Roland's literate despair', in *Reading, writing and the influence of Harold Bloom*, pp.176-90.

frequently the writers amend or replace the borders of the page in ways that imply a spatial relationship at work between the text's meaning and the object through which it is presented. In short, these writers make use of paratextual elements to create a physical space in which poetic interactions can occur. If '[a]goraphobia is a disorder which [...] effectively disrupts the ordinarily stable, and largely taken-for-granted boundary between inside and outside, person and place',<sup>5</sup> then the borders created or utilised by these writers are significant; they provide a physical indication of the spatio-political factors on which these family interactions are based. I contend that these writers emphasise their poetry's material boundedness in order to exert control over what Davidson terms '*frightful* patriarchal ideologies and conceits'.<sup>6</sup> The writers on whom I focus here seek to engage with the influence they feel from STC in particular – though also from Hartley and Sara – in ways which allow them to assert their creative independence. I contend that the fact that their works remain largely unpublished in print does not mean that they are unimportant. In fact, their chosen mode of publication reveals much about their sense of place within their family poetic network.

What is at play in the works I discuss here is the relationship between what Gérard Genette has termed the epitext and the peritext.<sup>7</sup> These two elements combine to make up Genette's definition of the paratext. Genette defines the epitext as 'any

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<sup>5</sup> Davidson, *Phobic Geographies*, p.106.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.21, original emphasis.

<sup>7</sup> See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.5. In this chapter, I am, by necessity, expanding the range of Genette's terms to include elements he did not intend his system to encompass. Genette acknowledges that his system of paratexts does not take the manuscript into account. He suggests that the manuscript is in 'an *almost* raw condition', although the 'sole fact of transcription [...] may induce paratextual effects' (p.3, original emphasis).



paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space'.<sup>8</sup> It includes elements like biographical detail or information about the writer's personal situation, insofar as that is known by the reader and brought to bear upon the meaning of the text. As will be seen in Edith and Ernest's works, the Coleridge surname is a key example of an epitext to these poets' works; as I outlined in the Introduction (pp.10-15), using the Coleridge name meant adhering to a set of rules carefully laid out by the family throughout the nineteenth century. The peritext, on the other hand, is contained 'in the space of the same volume', and includes elements like titles, prefaces or notes.<sup>9</sup> The difference between the two, according to Genette, is 'in theory purely spatial'.<sup>10</sup> The epitext exists beyond the borders of the page whilst the peritext exists within it, at the edges of the text. For Genette, paratexts may not always belong to the text proper, but they

surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strangest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book.<sup>11</sup>

Paratexts have the potential, then, to operate as a productive position of apparent weakness;<sup>12</sup> it is in the paratext that assertions about authorial identity are often

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.344.

<sup>9</sup> Genette, 'Introduction to the Paratext', *New Literary History*, 22.2 (1995), pp.261-72; p.263.

<sup>10</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, p.344.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.1, original emphasis.

<sup>12</sup> To use Lucy Newlyn's term: 'It was frequently the case in this period that creative identities were constructed from positions of apparent weakness – or rather, that identity was itself reconfigured, so as to make apparent weaknesses into strengths' (*Anxiety of Reception*, p.232).

located.<sup>13</sup> Although I do not discuss them here, this subversive strength is particularly evident in Sara's editorial practices, through which she employed paratexts as a means of asserting her authority over her father's works.<sup>14</sup> In a similar way, the writers I discuss in this chapter use paratexts as a way of presenting their poetry in Genette's split sense: they use peritexts to draw attention to the physical attributes of their works, both in manuscript and print, and their self-conscious invocations of their surname as a persistent epitext make clear that the text owes its existence, in part, to its interactions with the family tradition. Their formal and material operations work in a similar way to the rules of Fairyland I outlined in Chapter 2; that is, the page becomes another expression of these writers' agoraphobic '*place-making anxiet[ies]*'.<sup>15</sup> To appropriate Damian Walford Davies's expression, the page becomes 'a mapper of alternative social space'.<sup>16</sup>

The page might be seen as a microcosm of these kinds of interaction. Wolfson implies that the page is a social space.<sup>17</sup> Specifically, the page is a form of appropriated space. As Lefebvre summarises, social space is 'at once formal and material',<sup>18</sup> and the page encourages the individual – whether writer or reader – to adapt it to suit their unique engagements with the text. The page (either in

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Gavin observes that authors often use paratexts to address questions around what it means to be an author, reading practices, or politics in paratexts. See 'Writing Print Cultures Past: Literary Criticism and Book History', *Book History*, 15 (2012), pp.26-47; p.26.

<sup>14</sup> See Vardy, *Constructing Coleridge: The Posthumous Life of the Author* and 'Her Father's "Remains": Sara Coleridge's Edition of *Essays on His Own Times*', in *Nervous Reactions*, pp.207-27; Donelle Ruwe, 'Opium Addictions and Meta-Physicians: Sara Coleridge's Editing of *Biographia Literaria*', in *Nervous Reactions*, pp.229-51.

<sup>15</sup> Carter, p.180.

<sup>16</sup> Walford Davies refers here only to the literary text, but it is nevertheless a useful phrase for the work as a whole; that is, material qualities as well as literary meaning. See *Cartographies of Culture*, p.12.

<sup>17</sup> The page is one of the sites of 'complex interaction' over which multiple authors can lay claim (Wolfson, p.8).

<sup>18</sup> Lefebvre, p.85.

manuscript or print) offers the reader a site in which to engage with the text and, by extension, with the writer. Acts like marking the margins, whether with ink or – as was the custom of eighteenth-century female readers of library books – fingernail marks,<sup>19</sup> indicate the reader's eagerness to enter the writer's domain. The blank page, on the other hand, offers another way for the writer to engage with their precursors' poetics whilst allowing them to write in and on a space adapted to their individual creative needs. As Sally Bushell recognises, the use of the page as a specific site implies belonging to a literary legacy; it invites a kind of palimpsestic overwriting that inherently engages in a series of interactions.<sup>20</sup> If we think back to Hartley's concentration on the past iterations of matter, we can posit that paper contains an inherent potential in its material composition to offer the writer a way of interacting with precursors: the paper, by Hartley's logic, may be constructed out of the remains of previous works. Even the apparently blank page, then, is in some sense a palimpsest; it is never truly empty.

The physical space of the page and the choice of literary form both offer sites through which the writer is able to get around their anxieties.<sup>21</sup> In Lefebvre's terms,

[v]isible boundaries such as walls or enclosures in general, give rise for their part to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity. The space of a room, bedroom, house or garden

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<sup>19</sup> Peter de Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime: Readings in History, Aesthetics and the Subject* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p.269.

<sup>20</sup> Bushell suggests that '[n]ineteenth-century manuscripts can be conceived of as a palimpsestic resource in terms of the relationship between the "known" and "recovered" text (the unpublished layers beneath the surface of the familiar, canonical literary work) but they can also [...] invoke erasure of one version of a text in favour of another in a self-palimpsestic act by the writer' ('From "The Ruined Cottage" to *The Excursion*: Revision as Re-reading', *Wordsworth Circle*, 45.1 (2014), pp.75-83; p.77, original emphasis).

<sup>21</sup> Armstrong, 'Theories of Space and the Nineteenth-Century Novel', p.18.

may be cut off in a sense from social space by barriers and walls, by all the signs of private property, yet still remain fundamentally part of that space.<sup>22</sup>

The edges of the text and, beyond that, of the page are types of visible boundary; on the one hand, they maintain the text's distinct identity, but on the other allow it to remain a part of a wider, interactive literary space. It is a site which encapsulates the issues around social space, one which simultaneously reflects 'property relationships' (the ownership of the writer versus the reader, for instance), as well as 'forces of production' (whether the imaginative production of the text or the material production of the object). Stewart applies similar thinking to the book as a site for contained interactions between readers and writers. She suggests that '[t]he metaphors of the book are metaphors of containment, of exteriority and interiority'.<sup>23</sup> What is contained within the book is the potential for the writer and reader to each construct an autonomous space that takes the book's covers as a metaphor for phenomenological boundaries.

Bushell has suggested that drawing upon de Certeau's work allows for movement between these kinds of interaction: between a physical text's writerly and readerly dimensions, its present state and its genesis in the past, and its meaning and materiality.<sup>24</sup> For de Certeau, the act of writing is comparable to city planning; the urban planner, like the writer, is put in the position of 'having to manage a space that is his own and distinct from all others and in which he can exercise his own will'.<sup>25</sup> De Certeau maintains that '[t]he place is a palimpsest', and the writer, like the urban

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<sup>22</sup> Lefebvre, pp.86-87.

<sup>23</sup> Stewart, p.37.

<sup>24</sup> Bushell, 'The mapping of meaning', p.48.

<sup>25</sup> De Certeau, p.134.

planner, is never working with an entirely empty space.<sup>26</sup> The writer engages with the page as a new space, one which they can make their own through the way they construct their text and modify the page itself. Acts like ripping, folding or drawing lines across or around the page are all ways of regulating this site of production in ways that mark it out as distinct from other writers' works. In de Certeau's terms, '[t]his is the Cartesian move of making a distinction that initiates, along with a *place* of writing, the mastery (and isolation) of a subject confronted by an *object*'.<sup>27</sup> To become a writer, then, a person must exert control over the object in front of them: they must amend the page – whether in manuscript or print – to suit their own creative vision. The manuscript has been increasingly understood as a focal point for understanding the 'origins and process of writing',<sup>28</sup> one which demonstrates the ways in which the physical qualities of the text are intrinsic to its meaning.<sup>29</sup> In Ernest's words, the manuscript survives as 'a rare and perishable fragment of the poet's handiwork', and the precariousness of its existence persists as an important part of its identity.<sup>30</sup> As we will see, writers could exaggerate the impermanence of their manuscript through their use of a writing tool or the carelessness with which they treated the works.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.202.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.134.

<sup>28</sup> See J.C.C. Mays, 'Coleridge and Yeats', p.70.

<sup>29</sup> Jonathan Goldberg writes that '[t]extual properties are not merely a corrupt outside masking a true internality; rather, the inside is the outside' ('Textual Properties', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 37.2 (1986), pp.213-17; p.214), whilst David Scott Kastan argues 'that literature exists, in any useful sense, only and always in its materializations, and that these are the conditions of its meaning rather than merely the containers of it' (*Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.4). Both quoted in Jonathan Walker, 'Reading Materiality: The Literary Critical Treatment of Physical Texts', *Renaissance Drama*, 41.1-2 (2013), pp.199-232; p.216 and p.199 respectively.

<sup>30</sup> Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 'Introduction', *Christabel, illustrated by a facsimile of the manuscript and by textual and other notes*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Henry Frowde, 1907), p.vii.

Throughout this chapter, I recognise the ways in which textual meanings operate through what Jerome McGann has termed ‘the deployment of a double helix of perceptual codes’: linguistic and bibliographic.<sup>31</sup> Although the operations here are, perhaps, more subtle than the examples McGann cites (William Blake’s illuminated manuscripts and Emily Dickinson’s fascicles), I argue here that in Derwent Moultrie’s, Edith’s and Ernest’s manuscripts the distinction between ‘physical medium’ and ‘conceptual message’ is deliberately broken down.<sup>32</sup> As we shall see, particularly in the cases of Edith and Ernest, these writers were aware that the physical act of writing was in itself a way of engaging with precursors. They emphasised their writing as a family inheritance; it is the physicality of writing over a blank page which was seen as the family trait, not poetic genius as such. Inspired by Hartley’s thoughts on the relationship between matter and form, I suggest that these writers’ creative ‘matter’ is intrinsically linked to the physical forms it takes, both in the shape of their poems and in the way they are displayed on the page.

I adopt a similar approach to critics like Kristen Kreider, Marta Werner and Jonathan Walker in suggesting that the material properties of the manuscript are relevant to the meanings which, as Walker observes, ‘those properties uniquely embody’.<sup>33</sup> In common with these critics, I am not suggesting that these connections between materiality and meaning were always the result of conscious design choices. Instead, what I am interested in here is the way that the state of the physical object communicates the poem’s interactions with the reading community – real and

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<sup>31</sup> Jerome McGann, ‘The Socialization of Texts’, in *The Book History Reader*, ed. by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp.39-46; p.43.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Walker, p.201.

imagined – for which it is intended.<sup>34</sup> This kind of approach relies upon recognition that our reading habits are fundamental to the construction of meaning; the movement of the eye across the page – and, for my purposes, the way that this movement is arrested – contribute to the way we respond to a text. Along with Walker, this chapter seeks to ‘incorporate the materiality of [...] documents into the interpretative process to show how that materiality might jointly labor in the production of [...] meaning’.<sup>35</sup> My focus here is on the writers’ poetic connections to their family, and on the ways in which their self-consciousness about their place in the family’s poetic legacy is revealed through the physical attributes of their writing.

It is important to remember that the majority of the poetry I discuss here was never published, and was not intended for publication; it was usually written for a carefully selected audience of family and close friends.<sup>36</sup> Their family connections simultaneously provided the reason behind and a way around their agoraphobic creativity. In terms of both inspiration and intended reception their works were a family affair, so that an agoraphobic poetics becomes evident in the manuscripts’ aims.

The continuing importance of manuscripts to nineteenth-century culture has only recently begun to be fully recognised. Before I move on to examine the Coleridge

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<sup>34</sup> This approach adds an additional dimension to work by critics such as Lucy Newlyn and Zachary Leader, both of whom have explored the ways in which, to use Leader’s words, Romantic writing is ‘the product of a network of literary and social relations’ (*Revision and Romantic Authorship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p.15). Newlyn in particular highlights how STC, for instance, interacts with imagined readers in his works (*Anxiety of Reception*, p.73).

<sup>35</sup> Walker, pp.202-03.

<sup>36</sup> McGann quotes G. Thomas Tanselle to observe the importance of assessing a text by its intent: ‘a distinction does need to be made, not between literary and historical materials [but between] works intended for publication and private papers’ (‘The Editing of Historical Documents’, *Studies in Bibliography* (1978), repr. *Selected Studies in Bibliography* (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1979)) (McGann, p.39).

family's late-Victorian manuscripts, then, it is necessary to outline the changes in approach to the nineteenth-century manuscript over the last few decades.

### **I. Critical approaches to nineteenth-century manuscript culture**

In recent years, scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which the physical text in the nineteenth century was seen to facilitate interactions between the self and the external world. William St. Clair implies that the manuscript might be seen as evidence of the sociability of Romantic creativity; the manuscript can indicate something about the conversations that occurred around the creation of the text, and it records the input of amanuenses or of those tasked with transcribing fair copies. St. Clair surmises that '[w]hatever the initial transfer from mind to paper, the creation of a text was seldom a solitary activity'.<sup>37</sup> For Jon Mee, it is a mistake to see the rise in the myth of the solitary genius as a replacement for earlier understandings of creative sociability; he maintains that literary production continued to take place 'within and between variously situated conversable worlds'.<sup>38</sup> Mee demonstrates how these literary conversations are made evident in the texts themselves. Like Wolfson, Mee indicates that the page might be metonymic for larger interactive sites.<sup>39</sup> These critics recognise the ways in which intellectual or imaginative interactions are revealed in the physical appearance of the page, but Leah Price extends this connection further to

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<sup>37</sup> William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.158.

<sup>38</sup> Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community, 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.33.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.



suggest how the book mediated physical relationships between self and object. Drawing together book history with reader response theory, she writes:<sup>40</sup>

That books function both as trophies and as tools, that their use engages bodies as well as minds, and that printed matter connects readers not just with authors but with other owners and handlers – these facts troubled a genre busy puzzling out the proper relation of thoughts to things, in an age where more volumes entered into circulation (or gathered dust on more shelves) than ever before.<sup>41</sup>

The material book was a means through which the age thought about personal interpretations of the world. As we will see, the physical page and the ways in which it interacted with print publication offered an important way for Ernest and Edith in particular to express and experiment with their poetic identity. The page itself was a means through which they articulated their sense of place within creative relationships.

In the last thirty years or so, critics have responded to McGann's call for more attention to be paid to the physical qualities of nineteenth-century texts.<sup>42</sup> This approach is well-established in relation to texts up until the eighteenth century. However, as this chapter seeks to demonstrate, the line between what Elizabeth

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<sup>40</sup> Price provides a useful overview of how book history and reader response theory has begun to converge in the last few decades; see *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp.19-41.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>42</sup> McGann issued this call to action nearly twenty-five years ago when he wrote that '[t]extual and editorial theory has heretofore concerned itself almost exclusively with the linguistic codes. The time has come, however, when we have to take greater theoretical account of the other coding network which operates at the documentary and bibliographical level of literary works' (p.43). Michelle Levy repeated a similar call as recently as 2010; see 'Austen's Manuscripts and the Publicity of Print', *ELH*, 77.4 (2010), pp.1015-40; pp.1021-22.

Eisenstein termed 'scribal culture' and 'print culture' has tended to be drawn prematurely. Eisenstein suggests that this change is locatable in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>43</sup> Critics since have increasingly documented a much more significant time lag between the introduction of printing technology and a recognisable print culture. Paula McDowell suggests that a print society is not crystallised for at least three centuries after the invention of print,<sup>44</sup> and Rachel Scarborough King argues that 'even five hundred years after the invention of printing, the cultural meanings of the media of manuscript and print were tenuous, contingent, and in flux'.<sup>45</sup> Others, including Dustin Griffin, Harold Love and Margaret Ezell, have suggested that the shift from scribal to print culture occurred in the eighteenth century. It has seemed to these critics that it was then that the printing press, and the public sphere it embodied, overwhelmed the circumscribed audience implied by the handwritten manuscript.<sup>46</sup>

Nevertheless, the manuscript continued to be seen as an important means of communication in several sociable situations until the end of the eighteenth century,

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<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an agent of change: communications and transformations in early modern Europe, Volumes I and II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979; repr. 1994), p.31. Paula McDowell provides a useful overview of the development of, and problems with, the term 'print culture' in 'Mediating Media Past and Present: Toward a Genealogy of "Print Culture" and "Oral Tradition"', in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. by Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp.229-41.

<sup>44</sup> McDowell, p.233.

<sup>45</sup> Rachael Scarborough King, 'Letters from the Highlands: Scribal Publication and Media Shift in Victorian Scotland', *Book History*, 17 (2014), pp.298-320; p.315.

<sup>46</sup> See Margaret J.M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Dustin Griffin, 'The Social World of Authorship 1660-1714', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. by John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.37-60; Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

particularly in places like the coffee house or salon.<sup>47</sup> Stephen Colclough observes that the study of commonplace books and albums in the early nineteenth century ‘reveals the complex interweaving of manuscript and print culture in an age that we usually associate with the fixity of print’. He indicates that this approach should be extended to include the early nineteenth century as well.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Michelle Levy has shown that the manuscript continued to be an integral part of literary culture until well into the nineteenth century,<sup>49</sup> whilst David McKitterick argues convincingly that manuscript traditions formed a significant part of political structures in numerous early nineteenth-century countries, notably Germany and Ireland. He observes, too, that the use of printed books was associated with the social elite and did not reflect everyday experiences of the written word.<sup>50</sup> Levy suggests that scribal culture gave way, finally, to print in the 1820s and 30s.<sup>51</sup> Scarborough King pushes this date back still further; she demonstrates how manuscripts remained integral to the literary landscape until the end of the Victorian period.<sup>52</sup> It seems clear that writing by hand should not be thought subservient to print publication; as I argue below of Edith and

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<sup>47</sup> David S. Shields writes that ‘the manuscript was the favourite vehicle of communication in several arenas of sociability until late in the eighteenth century’ (*Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p.xxx, quoted in Scarborough King, p.301. See also Mee, p.12.

<sup>48</sup> Stephen Colclough, ‘Readers: Books and Biography’, *A Companion to The History of the Book*, ed. by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp.50-62; p.57. Samantha Matthews’s work on albums and commonplace books attests to this revised chronology. See “‘O all pervading album!’: locality and mobility in late-Romantic albums”, *Romantic Localities: Europe Writes Place*, ed. by Jacqueline Labbe and Christoph Bode (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010), pp.99-116; ‘Importunate applications and old affections: Robert Southey’s Album Verses’, *Romanticism*, 17.1 (2011), pp.77-93; ‘From autograph to print: Charles Lamb’s “Album Verses, with a few others” (1830)’, *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, NS 154 (2011), pp.143-54.

<sup>49</sup> Levy, ‘Austen’s Manuscripts’, p.1016.

<sup>50</sup> David McKitterick, ‘Introduction’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. VI 1830-1914*, ed. by David McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.1-74, pp.15-16.

<sup>51</sup> Michelle Levy, *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.19. Scarborough King provides a thorough summary of these developments; see pp.299-301.

<sup>52</sup> Scarborough King, p.299.

Ernest's works, manuscript and print provided different ways of thinking about creative identity.

Levy argues that '[b]y neglecting the vital influence that manuscript culture exerted on Romantic literary culture, we fail to appreciate the quantity of writing that mediated script and print forms, and ignore the ongoing contest over the identity and authority of print that this mediation entailed'.<sup>53</sup> The Coleridges' manuscripts in the late nineteenth century support Scarborough King's premise that this influence continued throughout the Victorian era, too, and, moreover, that manuscript culture continued as a means through which writers explored and asserted their creative identities. In *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing*, Marcus Walsh suggests that print culture has 'allowed authors a measure of identity, property, and determinacy in their writings which they did not have in a manuscript culture, and will not have in a digital one'.<sup>54</sup> This approach, however, neglects to consider the full implications of the text's materiality; as I argue below, in fact the manuscript allowed the writer a high level of control over their writings, and provided an alternative means through which to explore their artistic role. Furthermore, the manuscript could offer a unique method of expressing the writer's sense of involvement in a literary network. Levy, along with Jack Stillinger and Bushell, has shown that the Romantic manuscript provided an important way for the writer to construct and display an autonomous poetic identity separate to the public

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<sup>53</sup> Levy, 'Austen's Manuscripts', p.1016.

<sup>54</sup> Marcus Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.13.

figure constructed in print,<sup>55</sup> and that remains true for Derwent Moultrie, Edith and Ernest in the second half of the nineteenth century. What Levy suggests of Romantic manuscript culture should be extended to apply to the entire nineteenth century: that is, print eclipsed, but did not destroy, manuscript culture.<sup>56</sup>

McKitterick notes that late Victorian literary culture's stricter divisions between manuscript and print obscured the interactions that took place between the two modes in reality.<sup>57</sup> According to Scarborough King, these divisions resulted in a gendered attitude towards manuscript culture, whereby the manuscript came to be seen as a feminine form associated with amateurism and privacy (or, perhaps, entrapment within the domestic sphere), whilst print was linked to 'masculinity, professionalism, and publicity'.<sup>58</sup> This division is evident in Ernest and Edith's publishing practices. In spite of some noteworthy manuscript remains, Edith published just one poem, a pamphlet on her childhood recollections and a collection of her mother's letters (several editions of which she saw through the press).<sup>59</sup> Ernest, on the other hand, published numerous volumes over the course of a thirty-year career, including multiple editions of STC's and Byron's works, biographies of Thomas Coutts and John Duke, Lord Coleridge, and a volume of his own verse.

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<sup>55</sup> Levy argues that Austen 'continued to participate in manuscript culture even after print became her dominant mode of literary dissemination, demonstrating both the historical persistence of manuscript and its capacity to satisfy needs very different than those offered by print' ('Austen's Manuscripts', p.1017). Stillinger convincingly demonstrates that manuscripts were an important part of STC's writing practices (*Coleridge and Textual Instability: The Multiple Versions of the Major Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)), and Bushell has shown how Wordsworth's revisions to his manuscripts were crucial for the development of his poems; see 'Revision as Re-reading' and 'The mapping of meaning'.

<sup>56</sup> Michelle Levy, 'Austen's Manuscripts', p.1015.

<sup>57</sup> David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.50.

<sup>58</sup> Scarborough King, p.299.

<sup>59</sup> 'The Garden', HRC; *Some Recollections of Henry Nelson Coleridge and His Family* (Torquay: Fleet Printing Works, 1910); *ML*.

Nevertheless, both writers' public focus on the lives and works of other notaries, and the fact that their own publications were written almost entirely in prose, indicates a lingering anxiety with regards to their poetry.

The print culture hierarchy which places the manuscript only slightly above oral transmission presumes that the end goal of the text is always print publication. Gérard Genette's seminal work on paratexts is a case in point: he labels manuscript practices 'pre-textual', thereby denying the text an identity until it is fixed in print.<sup>60</sup> This misconception lies behind the neglect of the third generation of the Coleridge poets. Scribal publication was not indicative of creative failure; instead, it met different kinds of creative needs to publishing in print. Love, Ezell and Scarborough King have suggested of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively that many writers preferred scribal publication because it allowed them to 'manage communities of readers and to offer texts that were continually amendable or adaptable'.<sup>61</sup> Ezell's description of this approach as a form of 'social authorship' neatly encapsulates the interactions which were central to this kind of publication.<sup>62</sup> As will become clear shortly, Derwent Moultrie's, Edith's and Ernest's manuscripts offered them opportunities to emphasise relationships between their work and other texts, as well as between text and reader, in ways that were muted in print.

As we have seen in previous chapters, agoraphobia allowed the writer to productively engage with his or her creative anxieties; it encouraged the careful

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<sup>60</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, p.397.

<sup>61</sup> Scarborough King, p.300.

<sup>62</sup> Ezell, p.111.

drawing of tightly-regulated boundaries which nevertheless allowed for interactions between the writer and the sources of their anxiety – whether that anxiety is locatable in the works of other writers, the responses of readers or the physical world itself. The Coleridges’ manuscripts reflected their agoraphobic poetics in two key ways. Firstly, the writer’s design decisions – conscious or not – regarding their own manuscripts provided a further means for expressing imaginative and poetic containment. Secondly, their reactions to manuscripts as readers revealed how manuscripts could allow for controlled participation in a poetic community. It is on this first point that I want to spend the majority of this chapter, but to understand their uses of manuscripts as writers it is important to consider the ways in which the Coleridges’ roles as readers of STC’s work impacted upon their attitudes towards manuscripts – particularly since their privileging of the handwritten text in this way seems to have been at odds with the attitudes of many of their contemporaries.

## **II. ‘[B]etter materials for the sceptic’: STC’s manuscript legacy**

Hartley was symptomatic of his time – and of his upbringing – when he described the manuscript as the ‘nursery attire’ of the text proper (‘Books and Bantlings’, *E&M*, I, p.86). STC was of a similar opinion; he regarded the manuscript as an unimportant precursor to the text. He did not approve of the study of manuscripts; in one of his more famous contributions to *The Morning Post* as part of his series on Charles Fox, he derided the politician for his study of James II’s manuscripts. STC called into question Fox’s scholarly ability, scoffing that

[u]npublished Letters and Memoirs in manuscript have hitherto furnished better materials for the sceptic, than for the historian. The writers who have dealt the most largely and ostentatiously in these wares, and whose histories have boasted the thickest appendix of original papers, do not stand in the highest credit among us for good sense, or historical credibility.<sup>63</sup>

Fox's political acumen is implicitly called into question; STC suggests that Fox's dubious scholarly practices do not reflect well on his critical faculties as a whole. For STC, manuscripts could be dangerous in two ways if put into the hands of an anonymous reader: firstly, because they could undercut the image of the inspired solitary genius; secondly, because they were unreliable sources. That they remained unpublished by their author implied that they were not representative of a finished idea.<sup>64</sup>

STC's articulations of hostility towards manuscript culture are ironic considering its impact on his own career. 'Christabel' and 'Kubla Khan' circulated for more than fifteen years in manuscript form (and then were not so successful when they were eventually printed, as STC pointed out rather bitterly towards the end of the *Biographia Literaria*).<sup>65</sup> STC observed on numerous occasions that, if his manuscripts were collected, his critics might have a different view of his productivity (and, in fact, this belief provided the impetus behind much of Sara's editorial work in

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<sup>63</sup> 'Letter II. To Mr. Fox', *The Morning Post*, 9 November 1802, in *Essays*, I, pp.391-92.

<sup>64</sup> 'Essay II' in *The Friend* complains of the injustices to which study of manuscripts could expose authors: '[t]he Musician may tune his instrument in private, ere his audience have yet assembled: the Architect conceals the Foundation of his building beneath the superstructure. But an Author's harp must be tuned in the hearing of those, who are to understand it's [*sic*] after harmonies; the foundation stones of his Edifice must lie open to common view, or to his friends will hesitate to trust themselves beneath the roof' (p.14).

<sup>65</sup> *BL*, II, pp.238-39.



the 1840s and early 1850s).<sup>66</sup> For Wordsworth, too, manuscript productions seemed not to count; he counted as a failure his inability to complete *The Recluse* despite the gargantuan achievement of *The Prelude*, parts of which circulated in manuscript for more than half a century amongst friends and family, but which was not published until the poet's death in 1850. A large amount of Byron's, Shelley's and Keats's work circulated for years in manuscript and, like *The Prelude*, were in a lot of cases only published posthumously.<sup>67</sup> The poems that circulated in manuscript form partook of a tradition of circumscribed publication, and yet, as Coleridge discovered with 'Christabel', legally the texts were invisible until they were published in print.<sup>68</sup>

STC's manuscripts retained an important place at the centre of the Coleridge family's heritage. Sara perhaps articulated most strongly their central role in mediating a relationship with STC when she wrote that:

[i]ndeed, he seems ever at my ear, in his books, more especially his marginalia-speaking not personally to me, and yet in a way so natural to my feelings, that *finds* me so fully, and awakens such a strong echo in my mind and heart, that I seem more intimate with him now than I ever was in life.<sup>69</sup>

Sara discovered in STC's books and manuscripts an exaggerated form of the relationship between book and reader described by Price; that is, books could 'broker (or buffer) relationships among the bodies of successive and simultaneous readers'.<sup>70</sup>

Sara indicates that her relationship to the objects on which she read STC's texts

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<sup>66</sup> Sara Coleridge, 'Introduction', *Essays on His Own Times*, I, ed. by Sara Coleridge (London: William Pickering, 1850), p.lx.

<sup>67</sup> See St. Clair, p.158.

<sup>68</sup> Margaret Russett, 'Meter, Identity, Voice: Untranslating Christabel', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 43.4 (2003), pp.773-97; p.788.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.130, original emphasis.

<sup>70</sup> Price, p.12.

allowed her to experience a physical closeness with STC that she had little opportunity for in real life. These objects bring her into a productive conversation with her father in an interactive way that was absent from their face-to-face communications. Crucially, paratexts ('his marginalia') played a fundamental part in these posthumous interactions.

Sara's role in the collecting and re-issuing of STC's works has been much discussed in recent years,<sup>71</sup> and this was a task which Ernest took over in the final decade of the nineteenth century, although his part in rebuilding STC's reputation has been noticed much less frequently.<sup>72</sup> Ernest's career took advantage of the Romantic poets' rise in popularity in the final decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup> He was a part of a community of Romantic scholars and editors that included STC's biographer and Ernest's close friend James Dykes Campbell, as well as Wordsworth's grandson Gordon. In 1895 Ernest published the earliest collection of STC's letters, as well as extracts from STC's notebooks in *Anima Poetæ* (in the process setting back the re-evaluation of STC's moral legacy).<sup>74</sup> Ernest's largest contribution to Esteesian scholarship was the *Complete Poetical Works*, published in 1912.<sup>75</sup> Like Sara, Ernest is

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<sup>71</sup> Vardy's work has been particularly influential in facilitating and encouraging these important discussions; see *Constructing Coleridge* and 'Her Father's "Remains"'.  
<sup>72</sup> J.C.C. Mays's recognition of Ernest's careful approach to his editorial work implies a need to study Ernest's editorial practices in a similarly detailed way to that which Sara's approach has begun, in recent years, to enjoy ('Coleridge and Yeats', p.67).

<sup>73</sup> The Romantic poets came out of copyright in the mid-Victorian period, so they became extensively reprinted in cheap reprints and school textbooks at the end of the century. See Simon Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-1890', in *A Companion to The History of the Book*, pp.291-302; p.299.

<sup>74</sup> H.R. de J. Jackson (ed.), *Coleridge: The Critical Heritage Volume 2: 1834-1900* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.18. The offending publications were *Anima Poetæ from the Unpublished Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: William Heinemann, 1895) and *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 2 vols (London: William Heinemann, 1895).

<sup>75</sup> *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912).

best-remembered for his editorial engagements with STC's works, and much of Ernest's contribution rests upon his work with STC's manuscripts.

In 1897, Ernest was in correspondence with Thomas Hutchinson and W. Hale-White regarding White's publication of *A Description of the Wordsworth and Coleridge Manuscripts in the Possession of Mr. T. Norton Longman*.<sup>76</sup> This edition contained facsimile reproductions of 'Three Brothers', the Immortality Ode, a letter from Wordsworth to Humphry Davy dated July 1800, and STC's poem 'Love'. Ernest wrote to White to congratulate him on a 'fine specimen of typography', and continued to say that White had done 'a real service to literature' in producing 'so precious a record' of the composition of these works.<sup>77</sup> The facsimile edition seemed to offer readers the most direct access to the compositional process, unmediated by editorial intervention. This volume, and the principles behind it, inspired Ernest's facsimile reproduction of *Christabel* in 1907; in fact, he records his thanks to Hutchinson and White in the preface.<sup>78</sup> Ernest's edition of *Christabel* emphasised the poem's continued cultural importance; as Thomas Bredehoft notes, '[b]ecause virtually all reproductive technologies prior to modern digitization were more expensive than the setting of type, facsimiles formerly tended to be produced only for texts with the highest degree of cultural or other value'.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> William Hale White, *A Description of the Wordsworth and Coleridge Manuscripts in the Possession of Mr. T. Norton Longman* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1897).

<sup>77</sup> Letter: Ernest to W. Hale-White, 2 June 1897, BC MS 19c Hutchinson, quoted with the permission of Special Collections, Leeds University Library.

<sup>78</sup> *Christabel, illustrated by a facsimile of the manuscript and by textual and other notes*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Henry Frowde, 1907), p.ix.

<sup>79</sup> Thomas A. Bredehoft, *The Visible Text: Textual Production as Reproduction from 'Beowulf' to 'Maus'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.119.

On a more personal level, the edition also highlighted the importance of STC's material literary remains to the family's continued sense of identity. The edition is dedicated to 'the poet's granddaughters', Edith and Christabel, and the facsimile is reproduced from the manuscript in Edith's possession. The identity of this particular manuscript depends upon a series of interactions. The edition reproduced the fair copy of *Christabel* in Sara Hutchinson's hand. This manuscript had been passed to Dora Wordsworth after her aunt's death, and Dora bequeathed it to Sara on her own deathbed with a note (also printed in the facsimile edition) which read:

Dearest Sara, This original M.S. of your Father's was transcribed for Aunt Sarah. My mother gave it to me on my Aunt's death: & I give it to you knowing how precious it must be to you for all their sakes, & being sure it will be prized for mine also as a memorial of a lifelong friendship & of my undying Love. Dora Quillinan

Rydal Mount

May 22. 1847[.]<sup>80</sup>

Dora passed on the manuscript as a 'memorial' of a network of women who had been crucial in her and Sara's lives. The manuscript seems important to Dora, not as a record of poetic talent, but as an artefact that encapsulates a series of affectionate domestic interactions. When Edith inherited it upon Sara's death, she included herself as an extension of this network; she added her own name beneath Dora's note. The manuscript thus becomes a site for an intergenerational community; the relationship between Dora's and Edith's handwriting confirms the expansion of this domestic

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<sup>80</sup> *Christabel*, p.53.

circle to include the next generation, too. The history of possession of this manuscript indicates a sense of its value as an important part of STC's legacy, but, more than that, that history also demonstrates the manuscript's role in forging and continuing an interactive poetics between the Wordsworth and Coleridge households that lasted throughout the nineteenth century. Ernest's decision to print this note as a part of the manuscript deliberately draws attention to the importance of this paratext for the way in which the manuscript should be read; that is, as a crucial object for recording the family's personal history, as well as a significant literary work. Ernest's thanks to Edith and his wife for their assistance in preparing the publication make it clear that STC's legacy continued to be important to the family's communal identity.<sup>81</sup> STC's literary presence continued to be felt, and self-consciously invoked, in the poems of his descendants.

Derwent Moultrie, Edith and Ernest responded to their awareness of STC's ongoing legacy by denying that they were poets at all. The poetic manuscripts of all three writers contain elements which deliberately suggest that they were unpoetic documents. Michel Foucault's questions about what should be included in the definition of the author are relevant here: Foucault wonders 'how a work can be extracted from the millions of traces left by an individual after his death'.<sup>82</sup> This issue – of what should be included in an assessment of authorial identity – has been noted with reference to John Clare's asylum notebooks,<sup>83</sup> and much of the impetus for Sara's

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p.ix.

<sup>82</sup> Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), pp.113-38; p.119.

<sup>83</sup> See Tim Fulford, 'Personating Poets on the Page: John Clare in his Asylum Notebooks', *John Clare Society Journal*, 32 (2013), pp.26-48; p.27.

editorial work on STC's corpus arose from a challenge to conventional definitions of authorship; by collecting *Essays on His Own Times* in a discrete volume she sought, in part, to demonstrate that STC had not been as idle as was commonly believed.<sup>84</sup> Edith's poetry draws attention to the definition of a poet, and Derwent Moultrie's and Ernest's manuscripts both raise questions about what elements of an author's manuscript should be included in assessments of their work.

Derwent Moultrie's surviving manuscripts, in the vast majority of cases, have a tenuous claim to authorial activity: they mostly consist of transcriptions from *Dublin Acrostics*, a book of riddles first published in 1866 and republished (because, as the preface to the second edition observes, the first had 'long been exhausted') in 1869.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, even these provide some clues as to Derwent Moultrie's poetic identity: the acrostics, accompanied by what appear to be answers to a quiz, indicate a sociable personality, similar to that displayed in Hartley's or STC's drinking songs.<sup>86</sup> The double acrostic demands that the reader decipher puzzles contained within its form to find the answer.<sup>87</sup> In a similar way, as I argue below, the form of his poetry, like Edith's and Ernest's, contains important hints towards the way in which it should be read. Likewise, a transcription in Edith's hand from the Montagu family tomb at

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<sup>84</sup> She wrote in her lengthy introduction that she thought the volume would 'serve also as a vindication of him from contemporary charges affecting his private life and conduct, as that of indolence and practical apathy' (*Essays on His Own Times*, p.xix).

<sup>85</sup> *Dublin Acrostics* (Dublin: Hodges, Smith & Co., 1866). Derwent Moultrie seems to have read this first edition; the second edition added a number of new acrostics, none of which are transcribed by Derwent Moultrie (Untitled poem, 'Whenever me a singer sings' and untitled poem, 'As the fire burns clear and bright', HRC MSS).

<sup>86</sup> See Taylor, *Bacchus in Romantic England*.

<sup>87</sup> 'The Double Acrostic is a riddle, the answer to which is to be found in two words of an equal number of letters. The first portion of the riddle points to the words themselves, which form the answer: the second portion (to which numbers are prefixed) points to certain other words, the initial and final letters of which form respectively the two principal words' ('Preface', *Dublin Acrostics*, 2nd edn (Dublin: Hodges, Smith & Co., 1869), p.vii).

Coleorton indicates her interest in her family circle, even if it reveals nothing directly about her personal poetic practices.<sup>88</sup> In all three cases, a conflicted creative identity is displayed; these poets deny their status as poets even as they enact it. As with Hartley's and Sara's Fairylands, their poetic identities are thus contained within carefully controlled borders, yet remain highly interactive in nature.

### III. 'No poet': Edith's manuscript verse

Edith's manuscripts are documents which belong to the private world of her family and close friends. They are part of a hidden literary history: a feminine tradition which engages with a select and intimate readership. This history is inherited from a different thread of the family tradition; as the inscriptions on the *Christabel* manuscript suggest, the existence of an interactive group of female readers was a crucial – if much less well-recognised – element of the Lake School.<sup>89</sup> Although some authors, like Frances Burney, were hostile towards manuscript culture because it seemed 'repressive and anachronistic',<sup>90</sup> Levy notes that several female Romantic authors wrote their works with a 'specific familial audience in mind', and it was with these small, carefully-chosen groups of readers that drafts were shared and discussed 'at a critical stage usually but not always en route to print'.<sup>91</sup> Emily Dickinson is perhaps the most well-known participator in this wide-reaching practice, but

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<sup>88</sup> Edith Coleridge, 'The dreaded hour is come. 'Tis come, 'tis past', MS 1191.76.2, The Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

<sup>89</sup> The importance of domestic networks to the Lake poets are explored in biographies like Jones's *A Passionate Sisterhood* and Waldegrave's *Poets' Daughters*. Lucy Newlyn also implies the importance of domestic relationships to the Lake Poets' poetry (*Anxiety of Reception*, p.73).

<sup>90</sup> Levy, 'Austen's Manuscripts', p.1021.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1017. St. Clair also observes that the novels of Jane Austen and Susan Ferrier were 'initially composed to entertain their families without any expectation of having them published in print, or so the authors claimed' (p.158).

manuscript culture was an important way for a lot of, particularly female, writers to maintain their creative independence; they could write in their spare time and maintain control over the physical and intellectual attributes of their texts in a way that was not always possible in print.

Donald Reiman describes these types of documents as ‘confidential manuscripts’: they are designed for a ‘circumscribed audience either personally known to the author or situated as a group of like-minded readers’.<sup>92</sup> With this kind of manuscript, an agoraphobic poetics is evident in the physical document; it implies the author’s reluctance to release the text into a literary space beyond their control. Ezell, Levy and Scarborough King all suggest that these documents were of particular use to women writers, although Ezell’s recognition of their importance for provincial writers, too, goes some way towards acknowledging the extent to which confidential manuscripts were vital for a diverse range of writers of both genders.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, as Theresa M. Kelley has suggested in relation to *Benjamin the Waggoner*, Wordsworth found this kind of scribal publication necessary for his expression of what she terms his ‘aesthetic of containment’.<sup>94</sup> Such manuscripts embodied closely-contained interactions between family members and close friends; they belonged to a private world carefully demarcated from the public sphere.

Edith found the containment implied by the select circulation of the confidential manuscript to be freeing; it allowed her to write playful verse for the

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<sup>92</sup> See Donald Reiman, *The Study of Modern Manuscripts: Public, Confidential, and Private* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) and Levy, ‘Austen’s Manuscripts’, p.1017.

<sup>93</sup> See Ezell, pp.37-40; Levy, ‘Austen’s Manuscripts’, p.1017; Scarborough King, p.301.

<sup>94</sup> Theresa M. Kelley, *Wordsworth’s Revisionary Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.146.



amusement of herself and her inner circle, without being drawn into oppressive comparisons with her better-published precursors. Edith's poems, riddled as they are with personal allusions which only a reader she knew intimately would understand, are not designed for the literary marketplace. Martha Nell Smith has suggested that Emily Dickinson's decision not to print her work indicates an awareness of the reader's role in constructing meaning, since 'print reproductions often erase significant textual experimentation directed toward prospective readers and their performances'.<sup>95</sup> Edith's *'intimate epitext[s]'* exclude the wide readership invited by a published text.<sup>96</sup> Like her mother, Edith projects a tightly-contained affective community in her poems; in Swaab's words on Sara, she does not aim for 'such wide commonality as Wordsworth aspired to'.<sup>97</sup> In fact, Edith's readership is even more circumscribed than Sara's; whilst many of Sara's poems were collected in a quasi-publication form in her 'Red Book', Edith's are mostly collected in a rough booklet comprised of a series of folded sheets.

Edith's poetic practice might be productively compared with Dorothy Wordsworth's. Like Dorothy, Edith carefully managed her poetry's audience; both poets wrote for a circumscribed set of readers composed of family and close friends.<sup>98</sup> Dorothy, in fact, actively resisted her family and friends' efforts to convince her to

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<sup>95</sup> Martha Nell Smith, *Rowing in Eden: Rereading Emily Dickinson* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), p.13; quoted in Kreider, pp.68-69.

<sup>96</sup> Genette explains: 'I use the term intimate epitext to designate any message beaming directly or indirectly on an author's own past, present, or future work which the author addresses to himself, with or without the intention of publishing it later – for the intention does not always ensure the result' (*Paratexts*, p.386, original emphasis).

<sup>97</sup> Swaab, 'Poems and Their Addresses', p.54.

<sup>98</sup> Wolfson, p.180.

publish her verse.<sup>99</sup> Yet Dorothy continued to write verse well into her old age, and long after her dementia had rendered her incapable of fluent communication.<sup>100</sup> Healey demonstrates how poetry became for Dorothy ‘a cathartic channel to navigate, understand and attempt to resolve the tensions at the heart of this struggle for identity’.<sup>101</sup> Regardless, as we will see shortly with Edith, Dorothy habitually denied her own poetic identity. In verses written for Dora’s album, she declares that she is ‘no Poet *I*’.<sup>102</sup> Healey suggests that Dorothy preferred it when ‘I’ became ‘we’, and Wolfson demonstrates how Dorothy’s Journals provided a key site of poetic interaction with William.<sup>103</sup> In one particularly poignant entry, Dorothy describes a scene she wishes she could write in verse; it made her feel ‘more than half a poet’, she records. She implies, though, that she cannot write without her brother: ‘I could not sit down to reading & tried to write verses but alas! I gave up expecting William & went soon to bed’.<sup>104</sup> Yet, as Healey reveals, Dorothy’s autonomous poetic voice was at its strongest when her brother’s was weakest; during the 1790s, Dorothy denigrates her status as a poet, but in the 1820s and 30s she noted – guiltily – that her verse seemed to flow more easily than William’s.<sup>105</sup> Healey suggests that this shift occurred when Dorothy was no longer collaborating with William, and this change allowed her the space to discover and build upon an autonomous creative identity.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Dorothy wrote to Lady Beaumont that she doubted that her verses would ‘give pleasure to others besides my own particular friends!!’ (Letter: Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, 20 April 1806, quoted in Wolfson, p.180).

<sup>100</sup> Wolfson notes that ‘for all this sense of inappropriate identification, Dorothy Wordsworth [...] kept writing poems, for decades, for adults as well as children’ (p.182).

<sup>101</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.219.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Wolfson, p.182, & Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.215.

<sup>103</sup> Healey p.215 and Wolfson, p.170.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Wolfson, p.179.

<sup>105</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.214.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.217.

Dorothy's nervousness about expressing an identity separate to William's is noted by Kathleen Jones, who suggests in *A Passionate Sisterhood* that Dorothy's unwillingness to leave the house without William might be indicative of her suffering from agoraphobia.<sup>107</sup> If this assessment is true, her spatial phobias might be traced in her verse: her preference for the quatrain form indicates a need for a constricted poetic form to express herself adequately, and her unwillingness to make her manuscripts widely available suggests a phobic response to the wider literary marketplace. Wolfson describes Dorothy's poetic 'impulses and activity' as a domestic ritual: 'Dorothy auditions some poetry composed extempore, writes it down, shows it to William; he is pleased, reads it to the Beaumonts, who are pleased, and she attempts more, in impulses that are social, domestic, situational, and occasional'.<sup>108</sup> What Wolfson notes of Dorothy's manuscripts may be applied, to a large extent, to Edith's literary remains:

Under the cover of protest that she is not a Poet, nor was meant to be, her writing delivers a sub-genre of poems performing what they deny, speaking unnegated desire as well as vocational negation, not projected for publication yet prized enough to title, date, and fair-copy, as late as 1840, and to send to a friend to leave something "that would be valuable when she was gone".<sup>109</sup>

Edith's poems were not so carefully recorded; many of them are undated, and whilst they are not quite drafts, they are not neat enough to be labelled fair copies: as we will see shortly, she is not precious about crossing out words or bending her lines

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<sup>107</sup> Jones, p.186.

<sup>108</sup> Wolfson, p.180.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p.182.

around the edges of the page when she misjudges the space. The messiness of Edith's manuscripts confirms that the poems belong to the same 'sub-genre' as Dorothy's; even their material identity undercuts their status as privileged texts. As will become clear, Edith's verse was not intended to be taken seriously; she was never interested in poetry in a meaningful way, as her mother dolefully recorded.<sup>110</sup> In fact, Edith draws attention to the deficiencies in her poetry, which often seem to be deliberate. Her poetry was a means by which she engaged self-consciously but playfully with her poetic inheritance. An inherent agoraphobic poetics is implied in Edith's manuscripts in two main ways: her writing tools and her preferred form.

Edith's manuscripts display a complex interaction between pen and pencil which indicate something about the manuscript's intended readership. The neat copies of her poems, which are often addressed to a specific 'you' (a reader sometimes named in the dedication or in the poem itself), are written in pen; corrections are also done in ink. Rough copies, such as 'Who's who in 1864 – Craziness' (HRC MS), are written in pencil. As we will discover in Ernest's work in the next section, the pencil implies transience; it imparts onto the work a sense of disposability, and so implies that it is not an important text.<sup>111</sup> 'Who's who' good-naturedly mocks Derwent ('Hanwell's learned Rector') for his difficulty in managing his accounts, and it is an example of a private text composed spontaneously for a specific incident; works like this were only meant for family eyes.

On other occasions, a copy of the poem written in ink is corrected or altered in pencil. These manuscripts seem to begin as one type of object – a neat (if not quite a

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<sup>110</sup> *Coleridge Fille*, p.128.

<sup>111</sup> For more on the pencil as a transient medium see Kreider, p.94 and Werner, p.23.

fair) copy – but become another – a working copy. This is a transition that Bushell, James Butler and Stephen Gill have all observed in Manuscript B of Wordsworth’s ‘The Ruined Cottage’;<sup>112</sup> it is a movement that indicates a change in the way the writer approaches their own work, whereby they shift from writer to reader and back again. Nevertheless, that this alteration in the object’s purpose is realised via pencil marks is a reversal of the relationship between pen and pencil which Bushell describes: ‘[t]he writing of ink over pencil denies an earlier stage of the process any ongoing life at all, in a destructively diachronic model’.<sup>113</sup> In Edith’s manuscripts, the pencil overwrites the pen, so that the temporary or unfinished state seems to become privileged. In Edith’s case – and, in fact, Ernest’s – the interaction between pen and pencil, where the apparent permanence of the pen is destabilised by the interference from the transient pencil, indicates that the manuscript was an object that was not intended to leave the domestic sphere. The pencil, therefore, is a further indicator of a poetic agoraphobia, because it suggests that the manuscript was not intended for other readers.

Edith’s verse confirms an agoraphobic approach to writing. Her and Ernest’s preferred form was the quatrain, and it is clear from their manuscripts that they worked hard to get their metre right; in several manuscripts, marks above the line indicate that the writer counted the syllables carefully to ensure that the metre reflected the poem’s message.<sup>114</sup> As we saw in Chapter 1 (p.69), Stuart Curran

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<sup>112</sup> Bushell, ‘Revision as Re-reading’, p.76; Gill, *Wordsworth’s Revisitings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.52-53; *The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar*, ed. by James Butler, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1979), p.130.

<sup>113</sup> Bushell, ‘Revision as Re-reading’, p.76.

<sup>114</sup> For example, Edith’s ‘A Hymn for Christmas Day’ (HRC MS) has marks above each syllable that indicate her counting out the rhyme.

suggests that women's verse often reflected the confined quarters (schoolroom, bedroom, garden) in which they spent the majority of their time.<sup>115</sup> Curran recognises that the subject of women's verse often spoke to these spaces, but I would extend this reading to suggest that their verse forms also indicated something of their sense of entrapment. In short, poetic form became as important a spatial metaphor as any articulated within the poetry itself. The sonnet's role in this kind of productive containment has been well-documented; critics such as Michael Spiller, Jacqueline Labbe, Sara Lodge, Adam White and Robin Schofield have observed the relationship between the sonnet's closed form, a perceived loss of liberty and the subsequent discovery of a kind of creative freedom in the works of sonneteers from Charlotte Smith, to Wordsworth, to John Clare and Hartley.<sup>116</sup> Analysis of the quatrain as a closed form has been included in these works on the sonnet, yet less has been done on its potential as an individual unit to enact a similarly productive tension between confinement and creativity. Like the sonnet, the quatrain offers what Alistair Fowler calls 'a proportioned mental space'.<sup>117</sup> Kreider goes so far as to suggest in relation to Emily Dickinson's poetry that 'the quatrain stanza form [is] akin to a standard room: four walls, right angles'.<sup>118</sup> It is, in other words, a way of expressing confinement in a

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<sup>115</sup> Curran, 'Romantic Poetry: The I Altered', pp.189-90.

<sup>116</sup> Michael R.G. Spiller, *The Development of the Sonnet: An Introduction* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992); Jacqueline Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry and the Culture of Gender* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp.64-115; Sara Lodge, 'Contested Bounds: John Clare, John Keats, and the Sonnet', *Studies in Romanticism*, 51.4 (2012), pp.533-54; Adam White, 'John Clare's Spenserian Fragments', *John Clare Society Journal*, 33 (2014), pp.73-86; Robin Schofield, 'Hartley Coleridge's Poetry of Religious Devotion', *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 40 (2012), pp.69-77.

<sup>117</sup> Alistair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genre and Modes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), p.31, quoted in Spiller, p.2.

<sup>118</sup> Kreider, p.82. Kurt Heinzelman notes that the Italian sense of the word *stanza* is of a room or chamber, and so the single-stanza sonnet form would suggest a confined domestic space. See 'The Cult of Domesticity: Dorothy and William Wordsworth at Grasmere', in *Romanticism and Feminism*, pp.52-78; p.63.

private space, whether the rooms of the house in Dickinson's case, or the walls of the asylum or prison as in the works of John Clare.

The quatrain, then, is a crucial element to Romantic poetry, a fact evidenced by the form's importance to volumes like the *Lyrical Ballads* or Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. This form implied immediacy;<sup>119</sup> in *Lyrical Ballads*, for instance, the use of the quatrain suggested occasional pieces written out of a 'spontaneous overflow' of feeling.<sup>120</sup> The immediacy of the verse form is corroborated by the paratexts; Wordsworth's titles often record specific, and, we are meant to believe, recent occurrences. In many of these poems, such as 'Anecdote for Fathers' or 'Lines Written at a Small Distance from my House', the repeated quatrains indicate a social imagination; although each verse is a discrete unit, it forms a part of a conversation between the narrator and an Other (Edward or Dorothy, in these cases). Indeed, the ballad itself is a social form which partakes of a communal voice. The quatrain, at these times, acts as a formal representation of the 'one Life'; it recognises individuality, but places the individual as part of a network. At other moments, like in Blake's songs of experience 'The Chimney Sweeper' or 'The Nurse's Song', the quatrain becomes claustrophobic, emphasising isolation and disconnectedness. In a similar way, J. David Pleins has shown in George Romanes's work how the quatrain can imply imprisonment and confinement, the lines of the verse replicating the bars of the prison cell.<sup>121</sup> In Sara's *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children*, the quatrain

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<sup>119</sup> Spiller makes this suggestion of the sonnet, but the argument holds for the quatrain too (p.5).

<sup>120</sup> William Wordsworth, 'Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (1800), *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, I, ed. by W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p.126.

<sup>121</sup> J. David Pleins, *In Praise of Darwin: George Romanes and the Evolution of a Darwinian Believer* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), pp.105-06.

often serves to emphasise the rigidity of rules like the months of the year, classification of animals and Latin grammar. For example, in 'January is the first month of the year' the predictable rhythm acts as a memory aid and underscores that the months of the year follow each other as regularly as the quatrain's movement:

April's showers and sunshine bright

Paint the rainbow to our sight:

Then the violet smelling sweet

Under every hedge we meet (ll.13-16, *SCP*, p.81).

The regularity of this quatrain is emphasised by the strong, obvious rhymes, and these features act together to tightly contain the verse's message. In cases such as this, metrical circumscription indicates a need to maintain cultural, intellectual and social order.

Like Dorothy and Sara, Edith implied a close connection between the quatrain form and her poetry's content.<sup>122</sup> Edith's poetry frequently draws attention to the connection between her verse form and the spaces in which she writes. In 'A Christmas Tale', Edith notes a connection between being alone in her room and poetic inspiration. In that poem, she describes sitting by herself upstairs whilst friends and family enjoy 'joyous tunes and silvery laughter' below. She dreams that she is visited by the 'King of Love and Mirth', who berates her for being anti-social ('A Christmas Tale in three parts', HRC MS). The irony, of course, is that it is her self-directed loneliness that inspires her to dream and write at all. Similarly, an autobiographical poem describes her need for solitude:

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<sup>122</sup> Wolfson notes of Dorothy's poem 'Grasmere – A Fragment' that Dorothy employs ballad metre 'to capture ambling without agenda' (p.190).



When bored with company, my room

I often slyly sneak to;

But yet, I shouldn't like to live

Without a soul to speak to (Untitled poem, HRC MS).

This stanza underscores a common tension in Edith's poetry: that between her enjoyment of solitude and desire for company. The punctuation confirms the tension: the 'room' is separated from the rest of the first line by a comma, and from the final two lines by the semi-colon, but the semi-colon implies a porousness between the speaker's need for separation from 'company' and communication with other 'soul[s]'. The quatrain is the ideal form for expressing this kind of social attitude; its deployment here simultaneously offers the potential for isolation and interaction. The feminine rhyme ('sneak to' / 'speak to') tightly binds the stanza, underlining the quatrain's ability to constrain the poet's thoughts, and the form mimics her stasis in her room.<sup>123</sup> Yet, the stanzas in this long poem are numbered, an act which simultaneously defines them as individual units and notes their place as part of a bigger poetic system.<sup>124</sup> Because of its ability to exist as either a stand-alone form or as a part of a longer poem, the quatrain allows for an exploration of the oscillation between agoraphobia and claustrophobia. As we will see shortly with regards to Ernest's poetry, Edith's manuscripts imply that this switch between claustro- and agoraphobia was an important part of her poetic process.

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<sup>123</sup> Derek Attridge suggests that feminine rhymes can inhibit the 'onward thrust' of the poem. See *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (London and New York: Longman, 1982), p.106.

<sup>124</sup> In a similar way, Rachel Killick has noted of Baudelaire's 'Au lecteur' that '[t]he sequence of quatrains [...] has the advantage of being able to expand according to his needs, sustaining the patterns of progress, contrast or repetition that underpin his preoccupation with the themes of constriction and expansion' ('Baudelaire's versification: conservative or radical?', in *The Cambridge Companion to Baudelaire*, ed. by Rosemary Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.51-68; p.58.

Nevertheless, like Dorothy's, Edith's poems contain ironic assertions that she is 'not a Poet' (Untitled poem, HRC MS). Edith rejects the image of herself in poems like Sara's 'Edith Asleep', and instead foregrounds an unpoetic nature, which, I would argue, deliberately emphasises deficiencies in her verse that allow her to sidestep comparison with her forebears. In 'Edith Asleep', Sara envisages her infant daughter responding to the Lake District landscape in a poetic way; Sara wonders '[w]hat hath her sleep to her revealed?' and fancies that Edith might be dreaming of 'crystal streams' and walking through the 'grove and field' or 'devious dell' (ll.6-7 and l.25, *SCP*, p.73).<sup>125</sup> By positing that Edith walks through the landscape, Sara imagines the ways in which Edith might be imaginatively transforming it.<sup>126</sup> Sara later recorded, however, that neither of her children were poetic in nature; she wrote that Edith only read poems for their story.<sup>127</sup> She was disappointed that her children found Wordsworth's poetry, which Sara had 'so dwell[t] upon in childhood and youth', 'seedy' and dull'.<sup>128</sup> Lee Erickson argues that poetry declined in popularity over the course of the nineteenth century, and so Edith's lack of interest in poetry reflects its weakened status in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>129</sup> Sara, however, presents Edith's lack of interest in reading it as a disturbing break in a key component of the family's

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<sup>125</sup> For a sensitive reading of this poem, see Anna Mercer, "'What aspect wears the soul within?': Sara Coleridge and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Poetical Connections, and the Image of Childhood", *Coleridge Bulletin*, NS 41 (2013), pp.85-96.

<sup>126</sup> The idea that an individual imaginatively transforms the landscape by walking through it is one of de Certeau's most influential arguments (pp.91-110).

<sup>127</sup> *Coleridge Fille*, p.128. Edith and Herbert seem to have been more interested in 'things philological and scientific'; Edith records that she was 'found, once, deep in a treatise on Caloric' at Herbert's insistence (*Some Recollections of Henry Nelson Coleridge and His Family*, pp.6-7).

<sup>128</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.128.

<sup>129</sup> Lee Erickson, *The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing, 1800-1850* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp.3-4. However, St. Clair challenges the assumption that verse was the preferred reading of the Romantic age, and he suggests that the shift from verse to prose was not as sharp Erickson maintains (p.174).

identity (although by the time Edith was seventeen, Sara recorded with relief Edith's 'growing seriousness', and her habits as 'a most solid reader').<sup>130</sup>

Unpoetic identity became a repeated trope in Edith's verse. In an early poem, written when she was fourteen, Edith plays with romantic norms, mocking conventional poetic imagery and concluding by ironically denying her own poetic endeavour:

Sweet maid, I fain your charms would sing,

In verses clear & flowing –

But that, I am certain, would require,

A person much more knowing,

And more versed in the rhyming art,

Than I, for I'm no poet,

And that you very well may see,

And very well I know it.

But to my point – I must observe,

What trite, stale commonplaces,

Are now grown all those phrases which

Are noted as beauty's praises.

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<sup>130</sup> Quoted in *Coleridge Fille*, p.227.

We've heard enough of "coral lips,"  
The lily, & the rose,  
And how with taste to praise blue eyes,  
Why really goodness knows.

To say the violet they surpass  
In hue: –surpassing stupid!  
I should but prove myself an ass,  
Were I to bring in Cupid.

Or Cupid's dart, or else his bow,  
Or e'en the torch of Hymen –  
Or to deplore the grievous fates  
Of maids discovered by men.

And therefore, though I'd wish to make,  
(assuredly, dear, you can see)  
More compliments – yes I'm compelled  
To leave them to your fancy.

Do pray excuse this hobbling verse:  
Believe me ever thine.

(Indeed you might have had a worse)

Your faithful Valentine ('Verses for a Valentine', HRC MS).

Edith rejects her own status as a poet in carefully-constructed iambs; she invites her reader to 'see' that she is 'no poet', ironically by drawing the reader's gaze towards the obvious physical qualities of the poem (its 'rhyming art'). She proceeds, however, to criticise the unsuitability of poetic imagery; she ridicules the poet for the 'trite stale commonplaces' used to describe women in verse. This poem's title, 'Verses for a Valentine', highlights that this poem is addressed to a generic woman, and it rejects a litany of overused metaphors as inadequate in describing a real lover. Edith's mockery speaks to Romantic attitudes towards this kind of clichéd imagery; St. Clair records one commentator's opinion that there had been 'too many sonnets on the moon, elegies on a dead sparrow, odes to a drowning kitten, stanzas to pathetic old women in red cloaks, effusions on a withered rose, and thoughts on storms at sea'.<sup>131</sup> Edith's mockery joins in this kind of poetic convention, one which rejects 'commonplaces' as adequate means to describe real experiences. In fact, the poem reveals that she is a 'knowing' person who is 'versed' in the 'rhyming art'; her mockery demonstrates that she is a discerning reader of poetry, whilst the poem's regular rhythm indicates her knowingness as a writer, too. The form of her verse ironically gestures towards a deliberate derision towards poetic clichés; it enacts the knowingness that she appears to be denying.

Her apology for her 'hobbling verse' is disingenuous; this form of quatrain 'hobble[s]' between iambic tetrameter and trimeter, and by employing common

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<sup>131</sup> St. Clair, p.413.

metre Edith takes one more swipe at overused poetic practices. Furthermore, this poem is written out in fair copy, a rare thing for Edith. The folds of the paper indicate that this, and its companion poem 'Lines to my Goldfinch', were enclosed in a letter; the paper is folded so that the titles of the two poems would appear on the front of the folded page. The poem is set out in the centre of the page, and the stanza breaks are clearly marked by gaps between the verses. The layout of the poem, then, also draws attention to the poem's status. In other words, Edith employs both formal and material tactics to deny her poetic identity, conversely by exaggerating it.

Edith's auto-biographical poem is again written in common metre, which seems to be her preferred form for playful works. The casual penmanship and layout of the poem closely matches Edith's manuscript poetry from the 1860s. The poem describes Edith in terms of small personal details, such as her schoolgirl hatred of Philip of Spain and all 'useful knowledge', as well as her adult enjoyment of drawing, reading and walking. She describes her poetry as another of her hobbies, situating her poetic identity as part of an imaginative geography that is domestic in nature:

And this I count (a fancy strange!)

'Mongst my eccentric blisses,

In vacant corners of my brain

To spin such works as this is (Untitled poem, HRC MS).

Like 'Verses for a Valentine', this poem foregrounds a tension between banality and art. Her poetry forms an important part of her domestic world, but it does not belong in her public life. That it is an activity that takes place in the home is implied by Edith's choice of verb: she 'spin[s]' her verses. The noun, 'works', encapsulates the

tension between the exalted effort associated with poetry and the quotidian one aligned with women's household tasks. That she 'count[s]' it, however, implies that it is worth something; it may appear unimportant, but her poetic work is valuable for her self-construction.

The impetus for this verse is found in 'vacant corners of [her] brain' or, in Bachelard's terms, in an imaginative 'nook', a place where she can 'inhabit with intensity'.<sup>132</sup> The results of that experienced 'intensity' are the poems themselves, all of which are written in the short, intense bursts made possible by the quatrain. Her poetic impulses are agoraphobic by nature; enclosed in 'vacant corners' in her imagination, in verse they are further constrained by the regular quatrain form. The folds of this manuscript indicate that it may have been sent enclosed in a letter – certainly, the poem imagines one specific reader – although it seems to have been stored in an envelope.<sup>133</sup> As with 'Verses for a Valentine', the folds of this manuscript contribute to the sense of the poem's being carefully bounded, both formally and materially.

The autobiographical poem concludes by playfully suggesting that her reader might not have understood its intimate epitexts (see Figure 5):

If you're my friend, this authorship

No explanation needeth;

If not, I'll mention that I am

A Coleridge, – christened Edith (Untitled poem, HRC MS).

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<sup>132</sup> Bachelard, p.xxxviii.

<sup>133</sup> An envelope at the Harry Ransom Center is labelled in Ernest's hand as containing Edith's poems, alongside the rather damning instruction that 'these need not be kept' (HRC MS).

**IMAGE REMOVED**

**FOR COPYRIGHT**

**REASONS**

**Figure 5: The manuscript for the conclusion to Edith's untitled autobiographical poem. Reproduced by permission of Priscilla Cassam and the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.**



Edith draws attention to two interactions here: that between herself and her ‘friend’; and, via the reference to her surname, to that between her own status as poet and her poetic inheritance. Her name becomes an almost incidental part of her identity; she ‘mention[s]’ it, but implies that, if the reader has correctly interpreted the poem’s epitexts, no such labelling should be needed. Nevertheless, the surname is an important indicator of her interactions with the family tradition. Attridge suggests that feminine endings do not provide as strong a sense of closure as masculine endings, and that is certainly the case here.<sup>134</sup> The poem concludes with what Barbara Herrnstein Smith terms a ‘closural failure’, but I contend that it is a deliberate act designed to make the reader laugh.<sup>135</sup> The carefully chosen feminine rhyme (‘needeth’/‘Edith’), coupled with Edith’s introduction of herself only in the final line, indicates a playful bathos: she is ‘a Coleridge’, but not *the* Coleridge. The dash in the middle of the line further emphasises a disconnection between Edith’s first and second names. There is a sense, then, that ‘Coleridge’ is the most notable, because the most noteworthy, part of her name. If for Dorothy, William was the ‘model’ poet, here STC seems to be for Edith.<sup>136</sup>

The series of horizontal lines Edith uses to conclude this poem – and several others – visually indicates the importance of careful containment for her poetry. Likewise, the insignia Edith uses as a signature on the manuscript for ‘Verses for a Valentine’ suggests a similarly agoraphobic relationship between her given name and

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<sup>134</sup> Attridge, pp.103-06.

<sup>135</sup> Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968, repr. 1971), p.210. Herrnstein Smith observes that ‘cheap closure can be humorous’ (p.222).

<sup>136</sup> Wolfson, p.179.

family name – and, by extension, between her sense of individual identity and belonging to a family collective (see Figure 6). She signs off with a lower-case ‘e’ enclosed within a capital C, a symbol which neatly encapsulates her perception of the overpowering nature of her famous surname, as well as its ability to protectively enclose her own sense of individuality.

This conflicted relationship to the Coleridge surname is not unique to Edith. In fact, it is a common theme throughout the Coleridge family’s work. Healey notices a connection between Hartley’s valuation of print and his desire to ‘escape the Coleridge name’,<sup>137</sup> and Sara remained convinced that her work would be read only as something that was ‘curious psychologically’ as a product of STC’s daughter (see p.10).<sup>138</sup> STC’s great-great-niece Mary Elizabeth Coleridge felt that her distinctive surname allowed her publication opportunities that she might otherwise have been denied, but she also blamed her surname for constricting her literary potential.<sup>139</sup> In fact, she wrote under a series of cryptic pseudonyms for much of her career – as, too,



**Figure 6: Edith's insignia, from the manuscript of 'Verses for a Valentine' and 'Lines to my Goldfinch'. Reproduced by permission of Priscilla Cassam and the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.**

<sup>137</sup> Healey, *Poetics of Relationship*, p.86.

<sup>138</sup> Letter: Sara to Derwent, 7 November 1851, in *Regions*, p.27.

<sup>139</sup> Edith Sichel, 'Mary Coleridge', in *Gathered Leaves from the prose of Mary E. Coleridge*, p.11.

did Derwent (alias Davenant Cecil) and Hartley (who published essays under a variety of assumed names, including Thersites and Tom Thumb the Great).<sup>140</sup>

Ernest's reviewers noted that his famous surname seemed to have a great deal of influence over his writing – as well as his reception. The *Pall Mall Gazette* opined that Ernest focused too much on his poetic lineage: '[t]o be frank with Mr. Coleridge, we do not like such frequent mention of personages bearing the same honoured name as his own'. The reviewer counts eight separate poems on the subject of Ernest's forebears. Nevertheless, they cited his surname as a reason to read the work in the first instance; the reviewer admitted that his 'mighty name' was reason enough for the 'surliest critic' to 'give him a respectful hearing'.<sup>141</sup> Publishers at the turn of the twentieth century were beginning to utilise the kinds of marketing strategies familiar today, including using the author's biography and private life to increase the sale of texts.<sup>142</sup> The Bodley Head certainly adopted these tactics with Ernest's volume; their adverts drew attention to his surname, and, as the reviews indicate, the ruse seemed to work. Advertising Ernest's volume in relation to his family history brought Ernest's biographical paratexts to bear upon potential readers' approaches to his poetry. It is a tactic which the poems justify; like Edith, Ernest deliberately draws attention to his surname in ways which suggest that it is an influential epitext that dictates how his works should be read.

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<sup>140</sup> See Alison Chapman, 'Mary Elizabeth Coleridge and the Flight to Lyric', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 37.1 (2007), pp.145-60; Lefebure, *Bondage of Love*, p.137; 'On Parties in Poetry', *E&M*, I, p.17 and p.53. Hartley signed some early essays 'Thersites', a name taken from The Iliad. Thersites, a minor character, is not given a father's name, and he is an 'ugly' figure of ridicule.

<sup>141</sup> 'Coleridge III', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 September 1898, p.4.

<sup>142</sup> David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), pp.79-80.

#### IV. '[T]his poor verse': responding to STC in Ernest's poetry

Ernest's surname became an important representation of his belonging, however marginally, to a creative network. In his dedicatory poem 'To Derwent Coleridge', Ernest lamented that his generation was excluded from the poetic community to which his father and grandfather belonged:

Father, these verses must be dedicate to thee,  
Not Rhadamanth below  
Is more relentless – no escape for me –  
But 'tis thine hand will deal the blow.

Father, *thy* father was a poet! Dew  
Of Heaven was shed on *him*:  
Thou, and thy brother and thy sister grew  
By Hippocrene – ye lipped its brim!

Thy friends were poets. In thy mindful ears  
What melodies must ring!  
Nor didst thou fail in battle with thy peers  
When *thou* didst venture forth to sing.

Mine is a pale and imitative age,  
No purple robe for me –

Thy name, and this poor verse my heritage,

Which here I dedicate to thee.<sup>143</sup>

Ernest articulates a poetic geography whereby STC resides in a kind of literary Eden; STC's baptism by the 'Dew | Of Heaven' confirms his status as a divinely-inspired poet. STC's children live on the boundaries of that Paradise; they are found on the 'brim' of the poetic landscape. Ernest, meanwhile, is located at the outer reaches of this verse-heritage: the poet finds himself at the edges of the poem, in the first and last stanzas. He remains outside of the poetic landscapes populated by his ancestors. He is grammatically characterised in opposition to his forebears: whereas STC and his children are all invoked in enjambed, or unbounded, lines, when Ernest refers to himself – the 'me' of the first and last stanzas – the lines are end-stopped. In other words, 'this poor verse' enacts Ernest's poetic entrapment; he cannot escape the family tradition because the poem itself is a form of bondage. It reiterates that there is 'no escape for me' and the hyphens around this clause act to confirm further his imprisonment on the page. Ernest imitates and inherits the 'poor verse' of his ancestors, but it is that verse which also confirms his status as poet. As I demonstrate below, for Ernest boundlessness is equivalent to a loss of identity. In this dedication his grammatical confinement serves to confirm his place within the poem – and so within this 'heritage' – even as the text describes his exclusion from it.

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<sup>143</sup> 1898, p.43 (original emphases). All further references to this edition will be in the text.

The manuscript draft of the first two verses of this poem is torn from an exercise book (Figure 7); in the 1881 print, it is dated Easter 1881.<sup>144</sup> The poem is written in pencil, a medium which, as we saw with Edith's manuscripts, suggests impermanence. Indeed, in this instance the pencil has worn away along some of the folds of the paper. These folds indicate that the manuscript was folded into a small rectangle so that, like Edith's epistolary verse, the poem is further contained by physical boundaries created by the way that this manuscript was stored. The paper



**Figure 7: Ernest's manuscript of 'To Derwent Coleridge'. Reproduced by permission of Priscilla Cassam and the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.**

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<sup>144</sup> 1881, p.v. All further references to this edition are included in the text.

itself has been ripped along the bottom, so that the size of the page is altered to match the length of the verses. The text is therefore physically contained by the altered limits of the page. Kreider suggests in regards to one of Emily Dickinson's manuscripts for 'A Woe of Ecstasy' that a similar act of cutting the page to fit the length of the verses is 'indicative of [...] spatial containment and temporal stagnation',<sup>145</sup> and this is true, too, in the case of 'To Derwent Coleridge': the point at which the paper is ripped divides past generations from the present. Derwent was still living when the poem was written, and this material separation of the first two verses from the final two distinguishes between a mythic poetic past and a present reality. The deliberately circumscribed boundaries imply that the first two verses are trapped in a past dominated by Ernest's forebears.

These stanzas are written on the reverse side of the draft of another poem, 'L'Envoy', which concludes both the 1881 print and the 1898 published volume of Ernest's *Poems*. That the two poems are imaginatively linked is suggested by their positions on two sides of the same paper, and confirmed by a crossed-out line at the bottom of the 'L'Envoy' page, which is a rejected version of the first line of 'To Derwent Coleridge'. 'L'Envoy' asks the 'mighty Muse' for a 'casual ray' of inspiration, since the poet's organic inspiration is 'feeble and fitful' (l.4, 1898, p.107). This poem consists of a stand-alone quatrain, and the form confirms that this is a product of a fitful imagination that seems incapable of a more sustained composition. A note above the draft implies from where this mental block might arise. The note indicates the interactive impetus behind both 'L'Envoy' and 'To Derwent Coleridge'. It reads:

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<sup>145</sup> Kreider, p.75.

PATRI

POETA FILIO

FRATI POETARUM

POETARUM AMICO (HRC MS).

Although the Latin here is imperfect ('frati' should read 'fratri'), the implication is clear: Ernest is drawing connections between himself as a poet, his father (patri) and brother (filio) poets, as well as with his poetic friends (amico). The connection between the note and the poems is indicated through some further peritextual details (see Figure 8). The Latin note is separated from the poem by a horizontal line, which



**Figure 8: Manuscript of 'L'Envoy'. Reproduced by permission of Priscilla Cassam and the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.**



further acts to imply a containment of the note between the poem's title and the poem itself. That it appears beneath the title, however, indicates that the note belongs with the poem. This impression is strengthened by the inclusion of a bracket on the left side of the manuscript, which links the Latin note to the poem. The closing bracket is positioned at the end of the poem, suggesting that the poem occupies a distinct place closed off from the rest of the page. As we will see in the final section, Ernest was aware of the physical appearance of his poems and, in particular, was sensitive to the effect of symbols or illustration on a text's meaning. Here, the brackets embody an agoraphobic response to the open world of the page, yet the placement of the top bracket indicates this agoraphobic poetics is an important way of maintaining imaginative engagement with wider literary communities. In spite of these texts' performative dejection as to their own literary prowess, then, the manuscripts of 'L'Envoy' and 'To Derwent Coleridge' indicate that both poems were composed at a time when Ernest was considering his place and status as part of an interactive community of poets. These texts are responses to Ernest's attempts to describe his place in a literary circle fraught with productive anxieties of influence. Nonetheless, in these poems, he turns towards a poetics of interaction, a move confirmed by other texts in the 1898 volume.

Ernest's dedications to his printed and published books reflect this diverse creative community of which he felt himself to be a part. According to Genette, the dedication is an important indicator of creative interaction:

The dedication always is a matter of demonstration, ostentation, exhibition: it proclaims a relationship, whether intellectual or personal, actual or symbolic,

and this proclamation is always at the service of the work, as a reason for elevating the work's standing or as a theme for commentary.<sup>146</sup>

In the 1881 print of Ernest's *Poems*, 'To Derwent Coleridge' functions as the volume's dedication; it appears immediately following the title page, before the table of contents. The volume, therefore, 'proclaims a relationship' between Ernest's writing and his family background. Although he protests that there is 'no purple robe' for him, he nevertheless contributes 'this poor verse' to the poetic dynasty. In the published 1898 volume, however, this poem does not appear until page 43, thereby removing its status as a dedicatory text. Instead, its positioning implies that Ernest now controls the interaction. When placed at the beginning of the volume, the rest of the poems become offerings to Derwent and, by association, to STC. Ernest's work is therefore subordinated to his predecessors'. However, by placing the poem in the middle of the volume, it is drawn into interactions with the texts around it; it now forms a part of a poetic conversation driven by Ernest's creative outputs. Ernest's relationship to his precursors is thereby submerged, and its importance for his poetic works diminished.

The 1898 volume moves away from Ernest's intellectual or imaginative interactions and instead highlights his personal relationships. It is dedicated, via another Latin inscription, to one of Ernest's friends: Francis Burdett Money Coutts. Money Coutts was the heir to the Coutts family of bankers; he was a writer, and he also worked for the publisher John Lane, with whom Ernest's work was published (and to whom I return in the next section). Ernest includes in the volume a sonnet to

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<sup>146</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, p.135.

Money Coutts, which muses on the unlikely chance that they should be 'ranged [...] side by side' (l.4, 1898, p.100). An alternative relationship is thus prioritised for this volume: the personal friendship which, presumably, led to Ernest's poems being published by John Lane gains precedence over Ernest's family ties.

Nevertheless, Ernest's engagements with his poetic lineage remain an important theme for several works in this volume. These interactions are not static, though, and a development in his relationship to his precursors is noticeable in the revisions of the texts. In his poem 'Confession', the speaker admits that it is 'love' for his precursors that has allowed him to walk in the 'pleasant ways' of poetry. This poem exists in two printed forms: the version included in the 1881 print (which is dated 1870) and an amended version, published in 1898. An early manuscript also survives. The printed texts both articulate a poetics of exclusion: 'I cannot soar to heavenly things, | I cannot walk in earthly ways | [...] I cannot follow where you tread' (ll.1-5, 1881, pp.27-28; 1898, p.33). In fact, the manuscript indicates that an early version of the speaker has even less creative agency: there, he complains, in a line that is crossed out, that '[w]hen you pipe I cannot dance' (HRC MS). The speaker in this version imagines his inability to respond appropriately to the true poet's song; he figures himself as a failed reader. The printed form, 'I cannot pipe for you to dance', switches these roles, and the reversal of the pronouns is significant. In the manuscript, the creative impetus lies with the precursor poet, but the changes to the printed and published versions indicate that the speaker has claimed poetic authority, even if that authority cannot convince the precursor poet – who is also the imagined reader – to engage appropriately with the text.

In the 1881 printed version of this poem, the speaker locates himself in a realm of passive fancy – in Esteesian terms, the inferior type of poetic insight. Just as Edith denied her poetic identity, here the speaker denigrates his own inspiration; if fancy is ‘all’ he knows, the implication that his creative reach is limited seems clear. This poet exists in the kind of limbo that is excluded from the realm of poetic success he describes in ‘To Derwent Coleridge’:

I cannot follow where you tread,  
Or look behind the outer veil;  
I dwell without the camp, and dread  
To pass within the pale (ll.5-8, 1881, p.27).

There is a clear poetic politics of space here: the ‘true’ poet dwells ‘within’, in a sacred place accessible only through imaginative success. This speaker, who has already voiced his own sense of failure, must reside ‘without’ in the apparently boundless area outside of the text; in fact, he fears to pass within the boundaries of this ‘camp’. The camp is a specifically masculine domain, and the martial imagery indicates something about the combative nature of this poetic competition. This is a moment at which the poet’s agoraphobia switches to claustrophobia (see p.40); to enter into the camp is to enter a space already dominated by a successful poet.

When this poem was published in 1898, it was with a subtle difference. Two lines were changed, and the amendment significantly alters the nature of the ‘Confession’. The second stanza now makes clear precisely who the addressee of the poem is:

I cannot follow where you tread,  
Or look behind the outer veil;  
No honey-dew my soul hath fed,  
And where you mount my footsteps fail (ll.5-8, 1898, p.33).

The reference to 'honey-dew' engages this poem in a dialogue with STC's 'Kubla Khan'. That poem concludes with a description of the divinely-inspired poet whom Ernest invokes in his descriptions of his grandfather:

That sunny dome! those caves of ice!  
And all who heard should see them there,  
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
Weave a circle round him thrice,  
And close your eyes with holy dread:  
For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drank the milk of Paradise (ll.47-54, *STCPW*, I.1, p.514).

Once again, STC is confirmed as the true poet, '[f]or he on honey-dew hath fed'. Ernest, on the other hand, is excluded from that success because he has not taken in the honey-dew. The mirroring effect established by the very similar diction ('honey-dew hath fed') is reinforced by the fact that both poems are written in iambic tetrameter; Ernest redeploys his grandfather's swansong of poetic success to ironically indicate his own poetic failure. The final line is rewritten to articulate an admission of apparent defeat: 'And where you mount my footsteps fail'. In this version, the precursor poet is able to escape the boundary indicated by the 'outer

veil', whilst this speaker remains trapped within it. However, and somewhat perversely, it is this speaker's apparent failure which allows him to be successful: he cannot escape the claustrophobic boundaries imposed on him by his own limited fancy, but it is within those boundaries that he is able to write his own verse. Ernest mimics the spatial politics of some of STC's most famous verse – not least 'Kubla Khan' – in indicating that enclosure within a bounded space could be poetically productive. Just as the Khan's garden is 'girdled round', so are Ernest's imaginative endeavours productively contained.<sup>147</sup>

In print, Ernest's poems are carefully presented to emphasise their relationship to the page as a whole in ways which significantly impact upon their meaning. As I want to demonstrate in the final section, Ernest utilised the margins of his works – both in manuscript and print – to construct paratextual significance around his texts. He uses the margins to imply various types of spatial politics in ways which indicate how his poems should be read in interactive terms.

## V. 'An image of unbounded space': Ernest's marginal identity

In Lefebvre's terms, the boundaries of the text define a '*scene* (where something takes place)' – here, the act of writing poetry – and an '*obscene* area to which everything that cannot or may not happen on the scene is relegated' – that is, the reader's activity.<sup>148</sup> As Cynthia Wall has observed, poetry's appearance on the page is one of

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<sup>147</sup> For a more detailed consideration of containment in 'Kubla Khan' see Douglas Hedley, 'Coleridge's Intellectual Intuition, the Vision of God, and the Walled Garden of "Kubla Khan"', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 59.1 (1998), pp.115-34. Peter Larkin explores the ways in which containment is poetically productive in 'Fears in Solitude' in *Wordsworth and Coleridge: Promising Losses* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.149-56. For an excellent reading of containment in STC's later verse, see Graham Davidson, 'Work Without Hope'.

<sup>148</sup> Lefebvre, p.36, original emphasis.

the ways in which it is distinct from prose. She notes that in the variorum edition of *The Dunciad*, Pope deliberately ‘clutter[s] up textual space’ with commentary, in a way that anticipates STC’s glosses to the *Ancient Mariner*;<sup>149</sup> James McLaverty notes that these commentaries, like other forms of mediation in Pope’s poetry, ‘can constitute a barrier as well as an invitation to the reader’, and Tim Fulford has argued the same regarding STC’s glosses.<sup>150</sup> These notes disrupt the text’s identity by undermining the white space that contributed to the aesthetic characterisation of verse. They transform the edges of the page from a reader’s space into one dominated by the writer. In these cases, the margins are used to enhance the claustrophobia of the page in a way that highlights similar themes in the text – as in the case of *The Ancient Mariner* – and works to crowd the reader out from the textual space. In Ernest’s case, however, the wide, blank margins highlight his poetry’s agoraphobia; the text’s status as a bounded ‘scene’ is emphasised by the excessive white space of the ‘obscene’ area.

Margins are an important aspect of the Coleridgean text. STC was (in)famous for his habit of borrowing books and returning them full of annotations; H.J. Jackson writes that he ‘is the most notorious of all writers of marginalia in English’,<sup>151</sup> and Charles Lamb famously wrote in his essay ‘Two Races of Men’ that a book lent to STC would be returned with its scholarly value much increased: ‘if thy heart overfloweth to lend them, lend thy books; but let it be to such a one as S. T. C. – he will return them

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<sup>149</sup> Cynthia Wall, ‘Poetic Spaces’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.49-62; p.59.

<sup>150</sup> James McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.10; Tim Fulford, ‘Slavery and superstition in the supernatural poems’, *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, pp.45-58; p.54.

<sup>151</sup> H.J. Jackson, *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005), p.173.

(generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury; enriched with annotations, tripling their value'.<sup>152</sup> Annotating the margins of books was a habit Hartley inherited; the second volume of the posthumously-published *Essays and Marginalia* consisted mostly of Hartley's marginalia from Robert Anderson's fourteen-volume collection *The Works of the British Poets, with Prefaces Biographical and Critical*, Stockdale's edition of Shakespeare's plays, Allan Cunningham's *Lives of Hogarth and Reynolds*, and John Brown's *The Dictionary of the Bible* (*E&M*, II). Sara also relied on margins for the subversive assertion of authorial and intellectual authority.<sup>153</sup> In all of these cases, the margins serve as a social site of interaction between the present writer and their precursors. The margins provide a space in which the writer can eke out an autonomous creative identity in relation to the text – and the author – to which their notes are appended.<sup>154</sup>

In both manuscript and print, Ernest's margins radically alter the way his texts might be read. The margins are used in very different ways in his manuscripts than in his printed works. Karin Littau suggests that 'the experience of reading a printed book, unalterable and easily reproducible, is not the same as that of reading a unique handwritten artefact whose blank margins invite glosses'.<sup>155</sup> In the case of Ernest's manuscripts, the margins are filled with paratexts, or trimmed away entirely, thereby

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<sup>152</sup> Charles Lamb, 'Two Races of Men', in *The Essays of Elia and the Last Essays of Elia*, with an introduction by Robert Lynd and notes by William MacDonald (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1929), p.31.

<sup>153</sup> Sara's frequently monstrous footnotes to *Biographia Literaria* (1847) often dwarf the amount of STC's text displayed on a page. See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions*, 2 vols, ed. by Henry Nelson Coleridge and Sara Coleridge (London: William Pickering, 1847).

<sup>154</sup> H.J. Jackson has demonstrated how margins were an intensely social space for STC, who used marginalia to demonstrate affection in courtship as well as friendship (*Romantic Readers*, p.178).

<sup>155</sup> Karin Littau, *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies and Bibliomania* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2006), p.14.



shutting the reader out from any form of physical interaction with the text. They often include notes or lists, a practice which Isobel Grundy suggests is much more common in women writer's manuscripts.<sup>156</sup> Frequently price calculations are jotted around his poetic fragments, and his drafts are often written next to discarded drafts of letters. At times, the paper is marked by coffee stains.<sup>157</sup> The effect, as will be seen shortly, is to crowd the poetic drafts with quotidian detail, so that the poetry seems to be contained within a mass of extraneous detail that underlines its agoraphobic nature. Ernest's manuscripts are social documents; they indicate that, for Ernest, writing poetry was a normal part of his domestic life, and there is no clear distinction between his poetic vocation and everyday concerns. His poetry seems to have been written on whatever paper was nearest to hand; some drafts are on letterhead, others are on scraps of paper torn away from a larger piece, and still others are ripped out of exercise books.

Sometimes, these external factors suggest important alterations for the ways in which we might read the poem, and the margins often offer crucial suggestions towards how the text should be read and interpreted. For instance, the manuscript for 'Heaviness may Endure for a Night' (dated July 1880 in the print version of the poems) is enclosed by a black mourning border (HRC MS). The border acts as a physical indication of Ernest's grief, and so suggests that the poem might be a way of expressing his reaction to a death; whose is unknown, although the narrow border

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<sup>156</sup> Isobel Grundy, 'Women and Print: readers, writers and the market', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. V 1695-1830*, pp.146-59; p.154.

<sup>157</sup> Ernest's manuscripts demonstrate what Price has observed of the treatment of books in the home more generally; that is, '[t]he book can be used as a napkin for food, a coaster for drink, a device for filing, or (especially in eras where paper was expensive) a surface on which to scribble words only tenuously related to the print they surround' (p.19).

might indicate that Ernest was in mourning for a sibling.<sup>158</sup> However, Derwent Moultrie did not pass away until December 1880 (although it is possible that Ernest misdated the poem in print, since no date is recorded on the manuscript). The black border also emphasises the enclosure of the text on the page. Materially-speaking, then, this kind of Victorian mourning text is presented in a way which indicates the agoraphobic tendencies of a household in mourning; the page reflects the writer's temporary withdrawal from society.

On other, apparently contemporary, documents, the anti-sociability indicated by the black border is undercut by the contents of the page. The black mourning border becomes an indication for those outside of the household of a tragic circumstance, but the contents of the manuscript demonstrate that ordinary social interactions continued in the home. Such is the case in the manuscript for a short poem which explains the form of the Spenserian stanza (Figure 9). The poem, which itself consists of one Spenserian stanza, seems to be designed as an explanation for a child; the poem enacts a definition of the verse form in a similar way to STC's didactic poem 'To Derwent Coleridge: The Chief and Most Common Metrical Feet Expressed in Corresponding Metre' (*STCPW*, II.1, pp.807-08). The verse is surrounded by numbers in different formats, and Ernest seems to have used the stanza as a way of explaining various kinds of numerical notation. The bottom of the page contains what appear to be draft sums for Ernest's accounts. The verse, then, is one element of a page that contains various forms of notes; the only indication of the poem's privileged status is its position in the centre of the page. Fulford has suggested that the gloss to *The*

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<sup>158</sup> For more on Victorian mourning practices, and conventions of black edged correspondence paper in particular, see John Morley, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians* (London: Studio Vista, 1971), pp.69-72.

*Ancient Mariner* draws attention to the text as a written object because it highlights the act of reading;<sup>159</sup> the order in which the various fragments on the page are read might alter the meaning of the text, and certainly changes the experience of interacting with the document. Ernest's manuscript creates a similar effect.

The page is ripped in half, so that the black mourning border is only present on three sides. The disruption of the border has important consequences for the reading of the manuscript. Although the border makes it clear that the paper comes from a mourning household, the conversations implied on the page indicate ongoing interactions off the page. Furthermore, on the back of the page is a paragraph describing the location of Derwent's rectory in Hanwell in relation to Harrow and Norwood Green. The disruption of the black border is unwittingly indicative of the intrusion of ordinary social activity on secluded mourning rituals. The poem, in this instance, is one part of a series of interactions that take place on this page, all of which indicate Ernest's active role in his social domestic circle. Crucially, however, all of the writing on the page is in Ernest's hand, demonstrating that he retains control of the page space even when communicating with someone beyond it. The same is true of the manuscript for 'To James Dyke Campbell', which seems to be a neat copy of the poem (HRC MS). It is written out on letter paper, and its unusual legibility suggests that the manuscript was intended to be read, rather than as a further draft for the writer's use alone. Although the poem imagines a three-way conversation with Campbell and STC, outside involvement with the text is discouraged by the manuscript's lack of blank space: there is no space for a reader's contributions. In

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<sup>159</sup> Fulford, 'Slavery and superstition', p.54.

these instances, the margins are either trimmed away, so that the poetry is tightly contained, or filled with other notes that are always written in Ernest's hand.

In short, Ernest's manuscripts are private documents, and as such have no need to leave space for readerly interactions to take place. A surviving fair copy manuscript of Derwent Moultrie's poem 'To Christabel Rose Coleridge' suggests how margins can indicate the manuscript's intended use. The poem is dated 7 March 1844, when Christabel was ten months old, and it celebrates an older brother's love for his baby sister. He looks forward to her growth into adulthood:

Who was it on that happy morn

In May, (when flowers by earth are worn,

A month of gladness) that was born?

My sister.

Who is it that by sunny smiles

A beauteous babe the time beguiles

And one to dullness reconciled?

My sister.

Who is it that in manhood's years

I'll strive to keep from grief or cares

And from the present secret snares?

My sister.

Yes! Christabel when fair you grow

With large blue eyes, and brow of snow

Then will I not be proud to show

My sister? ('To Christabel Rose Coleridge', HRC MS)

This is a playful poem; the rhetorical questions invite a response from the baby, whom Derwent Moultrie imagines to be listening. The unequal lines add to the effect; the iambic tetrameter in each stanza is pulled up short by the final trisyllabic line of the quatrain, which conversely highlights the importance of the relationship by the unexpected offbeat at the end of each stanza. Unlike in his transcripts from the *Dublin Acrostics*, where there is no room for any additions to the text, on the manuscript of 'To Christabel Rose Coleridge' there are wide gaps between each stanza, and the poem is lavishly copied onto one half of a piece of stamped paper. The paper has been folded so that the first two stanzas appear on the front, and the second two on the verso of the inside page, giving the manuscript the appearance of something akin to a greeting card. This arrangement leaves one half of the paper completely blank. The 'private epitext' here is foregrounded within the text itself; the poem invites Christabel to respond to the poem, and that invitation is further communicated in the way the poem is laid out on the page. The amount of blank space works with the rhetorical questions in the text to invite responses from the reader, who in this case is two versions of Christabel: the contemporary infant and an imagined adult. This fair copy manuscript therefore simulates print; the generous white space encourages interactions with the poem's readership, and highlights a relationship between this text and print conventions.

Margins are significant for similar reasons in Ernest's printed works. In these volumes – both the 1881 print and the 1898 publication – the margins appear to aesthetically isolate the text, but in fact they provide a platform on which the reader might extensively engage with the poems. Like in *The Ancient Mariner*, Ernest's margins draw attention to the poems as written texts. The gloss to *The Ancient Mariner* first appeared in *Sibylline Leaves*, a collection whose very title emphasises the work's status as a written document by drawing attention to its former existence in manuscript.<sup>160</sup> The gloss highlights the poem's relationship to early modern typographical and book production strategies.<sup>161</sup> In Ernest's *Poems*, on the other hand, the margins foreground the existence of the poems as written texts by making clear the potential for further acts of writing:<sup>162</sup> those invited by the generous margins. Ernest's printed poems encourage extensive contributions from his readers, both those who are real and the ones with whom Ernest seeks imaginative interaction: namely, the previous Coleridge family poets.

In *Aids to Reflection*, STC summarised the importance of a book's physicality for its readers:

the immediate objects of our *senses*, or rather the grounds of the visibility and tangibility of all Objects of Sense, bear the same *relation* and similar proportion to the *intelligible* object – *i.e.* to the Object, which we actually *mean* when we say, "*It is such or such a thing*," or "*I have seen this or that*," – as the

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<sup>160</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Sibylline Leaves* (London: Rest Fenner, 1817).

<sup>161</sup> McGann, p.43.

<sup>162</sup> As Fulford argues of *The Ancient Mariner*. See 'Slavery and superstition', p.54.

paper, ink, and differently combined straight and curved lines of an Edition of Homer bear to what we understand by the words, Iliad and Odyssey.<sup>163</sup>

STC recognises a conflation of the reader's experience of the physical text – the 'straight and curved lines of an Edition' – with their intellectual reaction to it. Each reader's relationship to the text is therefore mediated through their interaction with the physical object which contains it. More than this, though, the book comes to embody the interactions between the different communities with which it engages: readers, writers, illustrators, publishers, printers, booksellers.<sup>164</sup> It carries marks from all of these interactions in its pages, so that the 'straight and curved lines' of each edition may not always be the lines which were originally printed on the page. Each reader's experience of the material book will, then, be affected by those who came to it before. The power of the book's status as an object capable of facilitating relationships between these parties is, perhaps, most powerfully demonstrated in the Shelley family's recognition of the Victorian fascination with this relationship between 'thoughts and things'. In recognition of the 'religious aura' which began to surround Percy Bysshe Shelley's legacy as the century progressed, the family prepared an edition of his works with charred fragments of his bone on display in a window in the cover.<sup>165</sup> This edition neatly encapsulates a complex connection between the writer and reader or collector that is imagined to be physical as well as

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<sup>163</sup> *AtR*, pp.395-96 (original emphases).

<sup>164</sup> Robert Darnton, 'What is the History of Books?', *Daedalus*, 111.3 (1982), pp.65-83; p.68.

<sup>165</sup> St. Clair, p.430.

**IMAGE REMOVED**

**FOR COPYRIGHT**

**REASONS**

**Figure 9: Manuscript of Ernest's didactic fragment 'Wouldst learn Spenserian stanzas flow'. Reproduced by permission of Priscilla Cassam and the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.**



intellectual.

Ernest's 1898 volume drew attention to the 'paper, ink and differently combined straight and curved lines', and self-consciously employed the book's physicality as a way of altering the reader's experience of and response to the text. It was published by John Lane at The Bodley Head, and several of its design decisions are attributable to a house style, yet the fact that the privately printed 1881 version offers a similar aesthetic – several years before The Bodley Head was established – suggests that Ernest maintained some control over the design of the volume. In order to appreciate the implications of the aesthetic design of the 1898 *Poems*, it is important to first understand something of The Bodley Head's history and its other contemporary publications.

The Bodley Head was founded by John Lane and Charles Elkin Mathews in 1889, and it stood at the forefront of the poetic revival of the 1890s; they listed among their authors Oscar Wilde, John Davidson and Richard de Galliene, and their illustrators included Aubrey Beardsley and Walter Crane. They also published the notorious *Yellow Book*.<sup>166</sup> By establishing a strong brand identity, The Bodley Head ran a successful marketing campaign against the declining popularity of poetry, and they might now be recognised as one of the earliest publishers in the Modernist tradition.<sup>167</sup> McKitterick argues that these kinds of publisher – with The Bodley Head

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<sup>166</sup> Although McKitterick notes that Wilde's trial in 1895 marked a turning point for The Bodley Head; by 1914, they were publishing A. C. Benson, G.K. Chesterton and H.G. Wells ('Changes in the look of the book', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. VI 1830-1914*, ed. by David McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.75-116; p.111).

<sup>167</sup> Margaret Stetz makes a compelling case for John Lane's commercial innovation; she writes: 'John Lane devised the first modern sales campaign in publishing: the first to focus not on individual authors or titles, but on an entire line of new and unfamiliar merchandise; the first to create and to sell an image of the publishing firm itself' (*England in the 1890s: Literary Publishing at the Bodley Head* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1991), p.75).

at the forefront – were attempting to blur the boundaries between commercial publication and artistic effect, and in the process they encouraged a self-conscious re-thinking of the role of the book which recalled the redefinitions of the book's role in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>168</sup> They advertised their other publications in the leaves at the ends of some of their volumes, and their books drew attention to typography in defiance of the mass market; as with Ernest's *Poems*, they imitated books produced by the private press movement to emphasise the craftsmanship of the bookmaking and aesthetic design and so, by extension, the quality of the poetry itself.<sup>169</sup>

These tactics meant that they had a cohesive, easily recognisable aesthetic. The Bodley Head presented themselves as artistic publishers, for whom commercialism was secondary to talent. However, as Rose has shown, they were 'shrewd profit-maximising entrepreneurs'. Rose summarises how The Bodley Head's venture worked:

Mathews and Lane worked out an ingenious formula for making poetry pay: they brought at bargain prices leftovers of fine paper, on which they printed a few verses, using large type, generous leading, and enormous margins, and they left the pages 'uncut'. The visual effect was wonderfully artistic. [...] Only a philistine would have pointed out that they were getting very little poetry for the money, or that the royalties paid were minimal.<sup>170</sup>

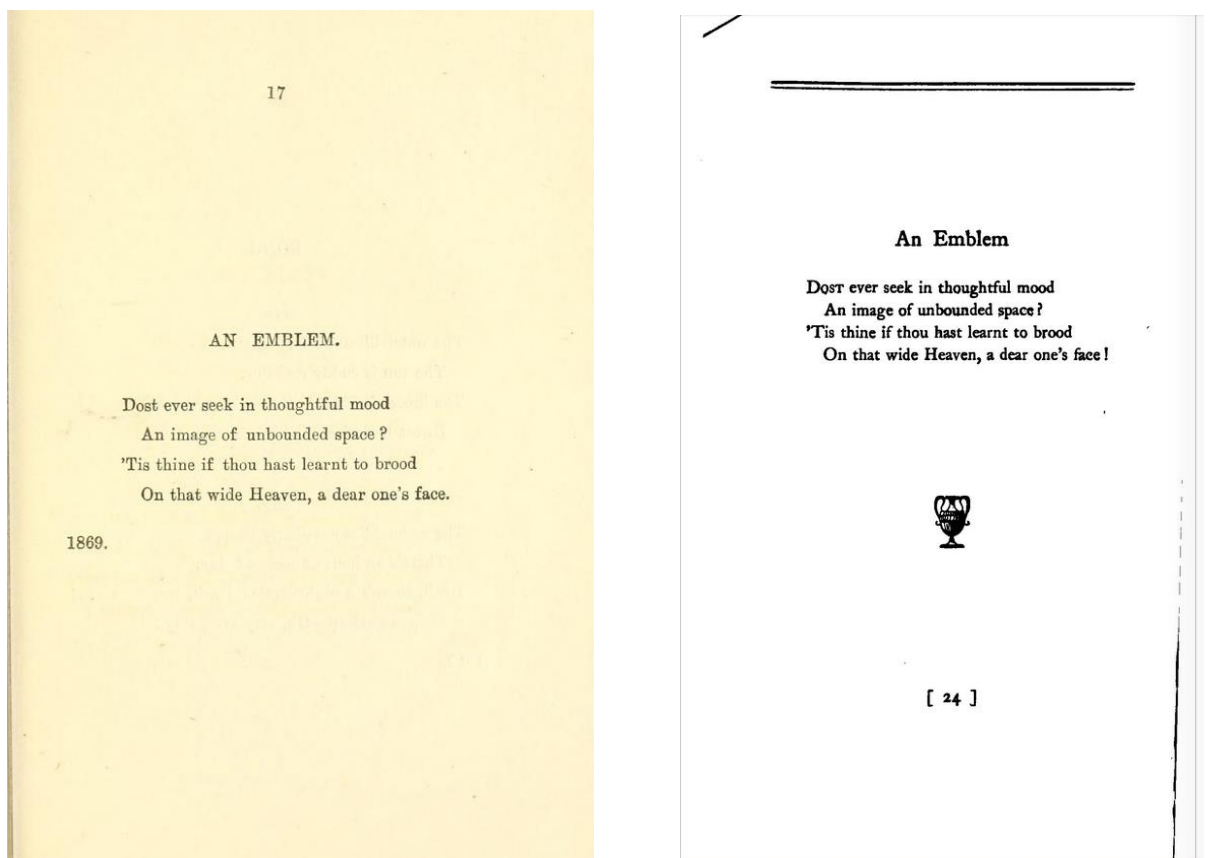
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<sup>168</sup> McKitterick, 'Changes in the look of the book', p.111.

<sup>169</sup> For more on private presses, see David Pearson, *Books as History: The importance of books beyond their texts* (London: The BL and Oak Knoll Press, 2008; repr. 2012), p.65.

<sup>170</sup> Jonathan Rose, 'Modernity and Print I: Britain 1890-1970', in *A Companion to The History of the Book*, ed. by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp.341-53; pp.343-44.

The publishers sought to emphasise the appearance that they were producing something akin to a private press book by advertising the small print runs (often 500 or less), thereby persuading customers that they were getting a rare object.<sup>171</sup> The thick paper, lavish margins and ornate decorations were designed to manipulate readers' expectations; as David Pearson puts it, '[t]he way in which a text is physically presented to its readers preconditions them, to some extent, before a work is read [...]. The packaging of a text at any particular point in time is part of its (and our) history'.<sup>172</sup> The Bodley Head's publications were carefully designed to imply that they were luxury goods, part of an elite set of objects that suggested cultural superiority.



**Figure 10: 'An Emblem' in 1881 (left) and 1898 (right).**

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p.344.

<sup>172</sup> Pearson, p.39.

For books like those the Bodley Head produced, it is a mistake to distinguish content from matter.

Ernest's *Poems* fit the design brief of the Bodley Head's publications perfectly; it is a lavish volume, printed on thick, high-quality paper and has lavishly wide margins. The publisher's house style complemented the design choices made by Ernest for the much earlier private print of the poems; the similarities between the appearance of the two texts – in spite of their different publishing methods and the nearly two decades between them – suggests that the way the volumes were formatted were significant for the meanings of the works. In Darnton's words, 'texts shape the response of readers, however active they may be [...] typography as well as style and syntax determine the ways in which texts convey meanings'.<sup>173</sup> The wide margins in Ernest's volume (like in others of the Bodley Head's books) recalled the wide margins which had characterised novels in the early nineteenth century, when they were used to bulk out texts to three volumes.<sup>174</sup> They also indicate that the text is a collector's item;<sup>175</sup> this style of margin was a common feature in art nouveau books, particularly after James McNeill Whistler's *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* was published in 1890.<sup>176</sup>

This design choice has an unintended side effect in Ernest's case: it links his volume aesthetically, as well as thematically, with the Romantic period. H.J. Jackson points out that there were numerous ways in which the Romantic market

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<sup>173</sup> Darnton, p.79. See also Pearson, p.34.

<sup>174</sup> Eliot, p.291.

<sup>175</sup> Price, p.4.

<sup>176</sup> See John Russell Taylor, *The Art Nouveau Book in Britain* (Amsterdam and London: Methuen & Co. 1966), p.46.

accommodated its readers, including 'by providing space to write in'. She observes that the wide margins in luxury volumes, perhaps unwittingly, encouraged the annotator.<sup>177</sup> The same is true of Ernest's *Poems*; the hyperbolic margins often mean that the white space on the page – a readerly site – is far more extensive than the area marked out by the text. The most obvious foregrounding of margins in the 1898 volume is around the short poem 'An Emblem' (dated 1869 in the 1881 print). In this poem, which consists of a single quatrain and was printed alone in the centre of the page, the contained space of poetic inspiration is figured in terms of a human face (Figure 10). The image makes clear that, although Ernest seeks a space that is different to his precursors', like Edith's his imagination is a fundamentally social one:

Dost ever seek in thoughtful mood

An image of unbounded space?

'Tis thine if thou hast learnt to brood

On that wide Heaven, a dear one's face! (ll.1-4, 1898, p.24)

In both the 1881 print and the 1898 published volume, the poem appears alone on the page in a way that emphasises its isolation. The text, then, acts as a way of staking out an autonomous position in a space otherwise implicitly filled by paratext. What we have here is another type of Bachelardian intimate immensity, where a circumscribed form seeks to engage with universal ideas. As in Edith's manuscripts, the quatrain form emphasises Ernest's agoraphobic poetics, whilst even beyond the text the 'unbounded space' he seeks is, in fact, closely confined: either the lover's face or the page might suggest 'unbounded' imaginative possibilities, but physically both

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<sup>177</sup> H.J. Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, p.33.

are confined spaces. The blank space left around the poem is important. The poet's identity is dependent upon the control exerted over the narrow space of the text.

The whiteness of the majority of the page notwithstanding, this obscene area still contains some revealing paratexts. 'An Emblem' is complemented by a number of other emblems, all of which indicate something about the way in which the poem should be read. Beneath the poem, the page number is enclosed, as in the rest of the volume, by square brackets, clearly defining this printer's convention from the blank space left for the reader. As in Edith's numbered quatrains in her autobiographical poem, the page number indicates that 'An Emblem' belongs in a sequence, even whilst it maintains its individual identity. As we saw above with 'To Derwent Coleridge', for some texts their place in this sequence has important consequences for their meaning. At the top, the page is balanced by a double horizontal line, which makes the text-space of the page distinct from the upper margin in a way that emphasises constraints placed upon the poetry. This margin, like the 'dear one's face', is not entirely 'unbounded', even if it does have unlimited imaginative potential.

Finally, 'An Emblem' is illustrated by a small pictorial device. The one which illustrates 'An Emblem' is one of fourteen such images in the text. These devices appear on some – though by no means all – of the pages with extreme amounts of white space, and, like the gloss to *The Ancient Mariner*, they serve to remind the reader that this is a written text. Illustrations were a key component of The Bodley Head's aesthetic; in his private pamphlet, *The Life of Sir Thomas Bodley, Written By Himself*, Lane draws attention to the illustrations as being the only parts of the text

added 'fresh'.<sup>178</sup> Like the generous margins, these illustrations recall much earlier book production techniques; in a similar way to fifteenth-century illuminated manuscripts, these devices enhance the suggestion that this is a work of cultural importance.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, as John Russell Taylor has shown, illustrations often showed multicultural influences, and so they could indicate an interactive imagination that operated at a global level.<sup>180</sup> Early miniatures, precisely like those in Ernest's volume, were not extraneous to the work; they were an important part of it. The devices are a clear instance of a peritext that impacts directly upon interpretations of the text.

In short, illustrations were an important means through which a text could be understood. Ernest developed an interest in the relationship of illustration to poetry; he produced an illustrated edition of STC's works, also published with The Bodley Head, in which he outlined his view:

[The illustrator] should be nearer to the poet than the general and should, as it were, repeat and transmit his message. It will, I think, be admitted that the artist who has illustrated this volume [Gerald Metcalfe] has caught the spirit of the poems which he has endeavoured to interpret, and has followed where the poet led.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> The text was privately reprinted for family and friends. See Thomas Bodley, *The Life of Sir Thomas Bodley, written by himself* (London: John Lane, 1894). <[http://www.1890s.ca/PDFs/Lane\\_Life\\_of\\_Bodley.pdf](http://www.1890s.ca/PDFs/Lane_Life_of_Bodley.pdf)> [accessed 3 May 2015].

<sup>179</sup> Finkelstein and McCleery, p.46.

<sup>180</sup> Taylor notes the influence of Greek, Japanese, Egyptian and Celtic design in art nouveau publications (*The Art Nouveau Book in Britain*, pp.32-33).

<sup>181</sup> Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 'Introduction', *The Poems of Coleridge, with an introduction by Ernest Hartley Coleridge and illustrations by Gerald Metcalfe* (London and New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1906), p.xiv.

Ernest describes the illustrations as a form of responsive text; they depict the artist's reactions to the poem, rather than the text itself. Perhaps significantly, the final clause here recalls Ernest's poem 'Confession' (discussed above), an indication that Ernest's poems might also be attempts to 'interpret' STC's legacy and to 'follow' where he has 'led'. Ernest suggests that illustrations might encourage 'closer study and a juster appreciation of [STC's] great as well as his greatest achievement as a poet'.<sup>182</sup> Ernest's selection of juvenilia and other minor Esteesian texts indicates an attempt to facilitate a re-evaluation of STC's poetic legacy;<sup>183</sup> the poems re-issued in this edition may not be recognised as STC's 'greatest' verse, but they are important for the potentially vivid responses they can invoke in the reader. Illustrations – including the types of devices used in Ernest's *Poems* – are a paratext created by a specialised reader. They are a form of marginalia: pictorial evidence of a reader's imaginative interaction with the poetry.

The most common devices used in Ernest's *Poems* are urns; eight of the fourteen illustrations are variations of this kind of design. The urn is a significant confirmation of the types of interaction on which Ernest's verse depends for meaning. It implies engagement with a line of poets who use their poetic forms to articulate a sense of productive containment. Spiller points out, for instance, that for John Donne the sonnet is the 'original "well wrought urn" – compact, shapely, highly finished, and able to contain, in concentrated form, almost all that is human'.<sup>184</sup> More obviously, Keats writes of the Grecian urn that its 'silent form, dost tease us out of

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p.xv.

<sup>183</sup> Ernest includes a large selection from STC's juvenilia, as well as from his late poems.

<sup>184</sup> Spiller, p.1.



thought | As doth eternity' ('Ode on a Grecian Urn', ll.44-45, *The Poems of John Keats*, p.373). Keats directly links the urn's circumscribed shape – which is designed to contain human remains that here are both physical and imaginative – to poetic creativity; the poet's reading of the urn allows him to escape the bounds of normal experience, only to return him to carefully-defined limits when he comes to record his responses to the vase. The urn has a sublime effect upon Keats; in a similar way to what I argued of miniaturisation in Chapter 2 (pp.119-28), Keats finds here that a small object can lead to mighty associations.

The devices in Ernest's *Poems* serve to selectively break up the white space around the poetry, but their placement and design seem to deliberately engage with the aims of the individual poems. In the case of the urn beneath 'An Emblem', the device serves to reinforce the agoraphobic effect of the closely confined text. An identical device appears beneath the poem 'O Dea Certe' (1898, pp.20-21), another poem that is preoccupied with the qualities of the 'dear one's face'. This poem again emphasises the connection between the finite boundaries of the 'pretty, little' face of the poet's lover and the boundless poetic possibilities he finds there, and the repetition of the urn motif highlights that imaginative relationship. This connection is perhaps most obvious on the final page of the volume. 'L'Envoy' is the last poem, and the device beneath confirms the end of the collection (1898, p.107). On this occasion, the illustration takes a natural form; the final image suggests leaves and flowers surrounding a scroll, on which is written 'Finis' (Figure 11). The form of the feathered leaves perhaps recall the kingfisher's 'enchanted gleam', but the illustration's containment of a firm statement of conclusion indicates that this poet is to be left in

his 'feeble and fitful' state. In short, the volume uses the '*obscene*' area of the page to highlight the poetry's status as a written or visual object, and the margins emphasise that it would be a mistake to neglect its physical appearance in the search for meaning.

Ernest's, Derwent Moultrie's and Edith's manuscripts and published works have indicated that formal and material qualities can reveal an agoraphobic poetics. This approach allowed them to productively interact with their precursors' poetry whilst maintaining autonomous imaginative spaces for themselves. At the same time, they reveal the ongoing centrality of manuscripts, and especially scribal publication, to late nineteenth-century print culture. Their poems engage with similar concerns to those expressed in Hartley, Derwent and Sara's works; like their precursors, this generation of the Coleridge family remain fascinated by the means through which they might define an imaginative space in which their own poetics can exist. Their self-conscious invocations of their precursors' works are often playful, and their poetic endeavours are not always serious. Nevertheless, their poetry is an important development of the Coleridge family's collective creative mission; it reveals an ongoing awareness of previous generations' influence, and the continued relevance of Romantic poetry to the expression of late Victorian concerns.



**Figure 11: The device from 'L'Envoy', 1898.**

## Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the Coleridge family's works should be read together in order to reveal their collective concern with family identity and its significance to the poetic canon. These poets do articulate an anxiety of influence, but it is not of the sort that Bloom describes. Instead, their expressions of anxiety reveal how each of these writers partook in the Coleridgean tradition. They enacted anxieties in order to reveal ways in which that tradition might be expanded to include their individual approaches. The metaphor of agoraphobia reveals the otherwise concealed ways in which these poets' anxieties were employed to assert an autonomous poetic identity.

This approach has wider implications for the understanding of nineteenth-century poetics in a number of important ways. Agoraphobia as a metaphor for a certain type of imaginative practice brings spatiality to the fore as a key way of reading texts. Agoraphobia is a fundamentally domestic condition that equates the boundaries of the home with those of the self. An agoraphobic poetics highlights the importance of the domestic space, not as subsidiary to the public sphere but rather as a crucial environment for the writing of self-interrogative poetry that nevertheless has profound implications for our understandings of nineteenth-century society.

The Coleridge family's focus on Greta Hall as an important site in which to locate their works – even when they had been long absent from it – is illustrative of a tendency to highlight the centrality of the home that was ingrained in nineteenth-century poetry. We might think, for example, of the late poetry of Coleridge and

Wordsworth, or the early writings of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, as well as numerous overlooked works by the likes of Charlotte Smith, Dorothy and Dora Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson and Emily Brontë. The presence of an agoraphobic poetics in the writings of poets of both genders – notwithstanding the overwhelmingly female demographic of clinical agoraphobics – indicates that this kind of domestically focused thinking deserves to be recognised as being at the heart of nineteenth-century works, not only as a secondary element to the public sphere. Agoraphobia challenges the dominant, masculine reading of Romanticism in particular, and offers an alternative, feminine mode of approaching the period that privileges domesticity and containment, and suggests how these ‘minor’ narratives contain considerable political, social and cultural implications. A wider recognition of an agoraphobic poetics, then, might reform our notions of the nineteenth-century canon.

Central to understandings of the home is the idea of the family unit. The Coleridges are, perhaps, unusual in their continued and self-conscious construction of a family poetics across multiple generations that uses their surname as a container for ongoing responses to a certain type of visionary poetics. Close blood ties are a necessary condition of participation in this poetic network; writers like Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, for instance, are excluded because they are not directly of STC’s bloodline. Kinship, taken as being evidenced in the family lineage, surname and in the very act of writing poetry, forms important boundaries around this family’s imaginative conception of itself as a united entity. From within the family unit, though, individual writers can both challenge and acquiesce to the family narrative,

often presenting these conflicting stances simultaneously. An important part of this aesthetic is each writer's development of an autonomous imaginative space that is based on personal perceptions of the real world. The unique phenomenologies presented in these writers' works leads to the construction of a series of interlinked, yet determinedly independent, fantasy spaces. In fact, Chapters 2 and 3 make the case for recognition of these kinds of fantasies as crucial to understandings of perceptions, and subsequent accounts, of real landscapes that might offer a significant expansion to current place-based canons.

A reading of this particular family's works offers a microcosmic challenge to Harold Bloom's anxiety of influence that may be expanded to productively include any number of this kind of tightly formed, carefully and self-consciously developed networks in the nineteenth century and after. As this thesis has demonstrated, the performance of anxiety can be a very powerful tool in the poet's – and particularly the minor poet's – arsenal. As the Coleridge family's works reveal, the performance of an anxiety of influence enabled the writer to consider his or her individual creative stance without rebelling against the family narrative. These writers deliberately present an aesthetic of failure, much like STC did himself after 1802, in a way that removes them from a Bloomian narrative. The articulation of failure becomes a powerful way of creating unique poetic boundaries. Agoraphobia, a condition that seems to demonstrate a failure to participate in the wider social world, offers an important means by which to express that aesthetic as something that appears negative but in fact empowers the poet in the development of his or her autonomous creative space. These performances of an anxiety of influence contain an

inherent rejection of a Bloomian narrative; the Coleridge family imagine creative conversations with STC, and with each other, which acknowledge STC's greater fame but push back at the idea that his notoriety lessens their talents.

The thesis's combination of life writing and close reading is crucial to the recognition of the successful creation of a family aesthetic that nevertheless emphasises each writer's unique contribution. It attempts to turn life writing into an analytical tool that aids in developing a deeper understanding of these writers' works. It is a method that could be fruitfully applied to the study of literature more broadly, but specifically that of the nineteenth century, given its self-aware development and interrogation of the life writing genre. In a similar way, the final chapter of this thesis reveals that reading manuscripts in the light of an agoraphobic aesthetics contains the potential to transform readings of the text. It indicates that there might be a strong case for re-instating the manuscript as a central means by which to understand nineteenth-century literature.

An agoraphobic poetics consistently demonstrates productive employment of anxieties in a way which foregrounds communality and intergenerational interaction. It suggests that bodily experiences might provide a means through which to understand nineteenth-century poetry as a coherent whole. The Coleridge family remained concerned with the relationships between bodies, texts and environments throughout the nineteenth century. Each family member's works reveal important ways of understanding these fundamental issues within a tightly contained poetic network that nevertheless sheds light on broader nineteenth century poetic practices.

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